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THE CAUSES

OF

THE PRESENT CONDITION

OF THE

LABOURING CLASSES

IN THE

SOUTH OF ENGLAND.

WITH

A FEW HINTS

AS TO THE MANNER OF PERMANENTLY BETTERING IT, AND GENERALLY AMELIORATING THE STATE OF THE COUNTRY AT LARGE.

"Bring to your enquiries a mind covetous of truth, that seeks after that impartially, and embraces it — how poor, how contemptible, how unfashionable soever it may seem."—Locke.

By B. F. DUPPA, Esq.

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PREFACE.

As it is the possession of property and the perception of the comforts which it ensures that make a man desirous of preserving peace and order in society. It follows as a consequence, that the solidity of the foundation upon which a society is built, is according to the proportion of those who have property to those who have not. If the great mass of the population of a country are in the possession of so much as will ensure them the comforts of life, and the non-possession of it be only a consequence of idleness and imprudence—if the possession of a sufficiency be within the power of every man's exertions to ensure, social order, from having so great a majority necessarily enlisted in its defence, must be immoveable. But if the labouring classes, who constitute the great

majority of the nation, have not a sufficient interest in the preservation of it to wish its continuance, internal order and tranquillity will endure only so long as those who have property are able to controul them by superior force. The object of the following pages is, firstly, to shew what is the present condition of the lower classes in the South of England—what their condition was half a century ago—and what has created the change: and secondly, to suggest measures which will have not only the effect of producing a temporary change, but of working a lasting benefit by ensuring the co-operation of the mass of the nation in the preservation of order; from making them interested in doing so.

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CHAPTER I.

That whatever is in contradiction to the Law of Nature must be productive of Evil.

A FRENCHMAN cuts a tree into a rude imitation of a cock, a mushroom, or a turret, and thinks he has added a grace to nature. A Chinese, by bandages, impedes the growth of the feet in proportion to the rest of the frame, and no doubt, according to his notion of ideal beauty, this is perfection itself. A Cherokee Indian bedaubs his face with red oaker or vermilion, and struts forth in all the pride produced by the imagined possession of superior personal attractions. Our grandfathers shaved off the hair which nature gave them, and covered their heads with a profusion of false tresses well greased and besprinkled with white powder. While we, who can laugh so heartily at a picture of a breechless Lewis the Fourteenth as a Roman emperor with a long frizzled wig, are scarcely able to turn our heads for a collar of stiff buckram that nearly strangles us.

If those whims of mankind, which are in direct opposition to nature, were confined to instances as harmless as those I have enumerated, there would be but little cause to complain; we might smile at the folly which give them birth, but we could not be apprehensive of any serious

results. Unfortunately, however, mankind is but too consistent in its caprice; and in serious, as well as in trivial matters, its practice is but too constantly in opposition to nature; — and as nature is right, and whatever opposes her is wrong, the deviating in such cases is invariably attended with results affecting the well-being of society; and, in proportion to the extent of the deviation, is the seriousness of the result. In mechanics, in the inanimate, in the vegetable, and in the animal world, we acknowledge this rule to be true: although we shut our eyes to the application of it in the moral, still equally applicable it is.

CHAP. II.

That of all Laws, that upon which Human Action is naturally dependant is the most dangerous to be tampered with.

If it were possible to conceive any one deviation from the law of that stupendous Being, the author of nature, certain to be attended with results destructive not only of the well-being of society, but of society itself, I should say it would *be the taking away the natural motive of human action, and the substituting for it some invention of man's imagination.* What, it may be asked, is the natural motive of human action? *Individual interest*, which, if properly pursued, is not only for the benefit of the individual, but of the society of which he is a member. Sound is the philosophy of the poet who sings —

> "To thine own self be true;
> And then it follows, as the night the day,
> Thou canst not then be false to any man."

Thus each individual, in pursuing what is for the benefit of self, is pursuing what adds to the happiness of the community in general, but more particularly of those immediately connected with him. To enable mankind to pursue this noble object with certainty, *God has ordained that the consequences of men's actions should be the regulators of them; and that the suffering generated by imprudence should warn them to act differently hereafter.** *Knowledge is but the experience of consequences. If consequences be not allowed to follow, whence can come an acquaintance with right or wrong?* The soundness of this doctrine was appreciated by a celebrated foreigner of the last century: he seized the idea, and embellished it with all the vigour of his creative imagination. He made it the sole rule for the education of youth; and, in following him through his beautiful composition, one cannot but be struck by the irresistible force of truth which lights up every page. The system is, no doubt, (as what systems are not?) carried too far to be practicable. But, like the painter's beau ideal, the nearer we can approach it, the more beautiful will be our work.

CHAP. III.

That the Poor Law does act in this manner.

But our poor law is framed, as it were, expressly to obviate the consequences of action, for by its operation men are enabled to enter into all the relations of life without in-

* Τον φρονειν βροτους οδωσαντα, τον παθει μαθος
Θεντα κυριως εχειν.—*Æschyl. Agamem.*

curring the responsibility of them; and are tempted to be lavish of the earnings of their daily labour, as they need not be apprehensive of future starvation. Hence is the carelessness with which the lower classes proceed to give existence to a family without taking any means for its support — and why? The provision of that family, if not attended to by them, must be a matter of consideration to the parish. Hence, too, is it that they consume the earnings of youth in present enjoyment, without one thought of a provision for age. Never was there a law framed for a more benevolent object, or with a more humane intention than that passed in the 43rd year of Queen Elizabeth, and never was there one which has entailed such unlooked for and disastrous consequences upon a country.

I shall make no apology for giving here and elsewhere copious extracts from the minutes of evidence taken before the committee appointed by the House of Lords in the beginning of this year to make enquiries respecting the poor laws — in them is to be found some most valuable information; the more valuable as it comes generally from practical men—men versed in the affairs of life.

"In the next adjoining parish there are, or were a few weeks ago, from twenty to thirty men out of employment; some were men with families, but the greater part single men—*and many of them have been earning and spending large wages in the summer, (many of them out of the parish) and then coming in and throwing themselves upon the parish for support in winter.*"—Evidence of Mr. Partington of Sussex; and he afterwards says, I can even go farther. "We have many cases before us in that district, of men coming and demanding employment from the parish who have thrown themselves out of good work by their misbehaviour or idleness."—Committee: "Upon what principle do magistrates order the parish to relieve such persons?"

Mr. Partington: "Because we conceive that no man must be left to starve."

Rev. H. Foulis, of Lincolnshire: "I think the comforts of the poor have certainly diminished, but I think it is partly owing to the poor people themselves; they do not live so hardily as they used to do, and they dress themselves much more expensively; they do not use the same food or live in the same way."

"You are understood to state that you do not consider the labourers in your own immediate parish to be in a bad situation?

"Not at all.

"Do you think the practice of not making up the wages out of the poor rate, and of not allowing so much for every child, has had a great tendency not only to ameliorate the condition of the labourer, but also to decrease the poor rate?

"I have no doubt of it; I am sure it is the true principle to act upon to throw them upon their own resources as much as possible; they have so many ways of getting money which no overseer can point out. In my own parish, when I came to it, I could find instances of drunken people earning good wages, who were the most forlorn people in the place, and others with less wages living comfortably and respectably; and I immediately saw that the system wanted to be changed."

Thomas Walker, Magistrate: "Had you at Manchester frequent cases of persons receiving large wages, that have stopped all at once and immediately come upon the poor rate?

"They used to do so more than they do now.

"What has prevented it lately?

"The better administration of the poor laws.

"Has it occurred to you whether there might not be

any means of punishing this improvidence, which brings them upon the poor rate so soon after they are in profitable employment?

"No: I would adopt a strict administration of the poor laws, *and leave that improvidence to punish itself*.

"Formerly did that evil prevail to a great extent?

"Yes: I have heard of a man earning five guineas a week, and after being ill a week, coming upon the poor rate.

Committee: "How much do you pay them (the labourers) in harvest time?

Mr. R. Holloway, of Shipley Weald of Sussex: "So much an acre for reaping, so much for mowing, and so on.

"How much can they earn per week at that time?

"I should expect they make about 4*l*. or 5*l*.

"How much by the week do you imagine they can earn in harvest time?

"There is about a week or ten days when they are reaping, they can earn 30 or 40*s*., but that does not hold many days: some men want seven acres to reap, another eight, and another nine. We pay them at the end of the month.

"He would earn 3 or 4*l*. more (than his regular wages) in the course of the harvest?

"Yes."

Evidence of R. A. Slaney, Esq.—"Do you think, then, that it is beneficial to the poor not to be dependent upon parish relief?

"Highly beneficial.

"Is it not your opinion that the labouring classes are in a much better condition when they place no dependence on parish rates, than when they are in the habit of applying for relief on any unexpected calamity coming upon them?

"Undoubtedly; the less they look to the rates, and the more they look to their own exertions, the better they are off in every instance."

CHAP. IV.

That Charity the Offspring of a good Heart, can never be created by a Statute.

THE great object of the statute passed in the 43d year of Queen Elizabeth, is evidently to make all persons equally charitable, an intention most commendable but utterly impracticable. The only punishment which ever can be inflicted upon those who sympathize not in the sufferings of their fellow-creatures, is the punishment of opinion; and when that has ceased to visit persons of this class, it is a sign that the mass of society is so bad that no law can make it better. Opinion is all-powerful in a healthy state of society, and when the great mass is alive to a sense of shame, where is the individual who dare resist it? Where is he who would have remained sitting in the Grecian theatre when all rose to give place to white hairs which virtue had rendered honourable?

There is a law of honour with regard to transactions which the courts of justice do not reach, and are not its decrees imperative? The individual who dare resist them is as effectually banished from society, as though a judge had pronounced the sentence. This is the only human tribunal uncharitableness can ever be brought before without generating evils greater and more prejudicial to society than those it is created to remove. I much question whe-

ther over-legislation be not in itself a greater evil than a deficiency of legal provisions. Human action should in most cases be left to correct itself. The making a quantity of preventive laws in consequence of particular instances of evil would be likely to, and indeed has generated evils more intolerable than those intended to be cured. Perhaps there is no greater proof of the inefficiency of a legislature than the number and intricacy of its enactments. To the sneer of those who ridicule the objecting to the rules of man being substituted for those of nature, and say, "Would you turn us back to the savage wildness of primitive nature?" I answer, No, but art should improve nature by following her, as the English have done with regard to the arrangement of pleasure grounds, and not by making any attempt to counteract her general rules or set up in their place some device of human caprice or wantonness. Cut off the sharp angle of yonder ground, and by letting the stream take a wider sweep increase the general effect; but do not drive the water up into the air in jets d'eau or make it fall in artificial cascades.

CHAP. V.

That Improvidence to the Degree generated by the Operation of the Poor Laws does not exist, and has never existed where a Cause working in the same manner is not in activity.

I HAVE said, that our poor law obviates the natural consequences of action, and I have said the results are, that people marry without thinking of a provision for their

children, and are so improvident of their gains, as not to hesitate spending the whole for an hour's gratification and amusement — but is not this the case every where? No — It is no great length of time since I returned from the Continent, after a residence of between three and four years, and I had an opportunity of observing, that in France there exists among the peasantry a knowledge of the value of property, a prudence which makes them save from their earnings, and not think of marrying until possessed of a sufficiency to set up a comfortable menage, with a store of linen that would be quite incredible to those who have not visited their cottages, as I have had occasion to do in the shooting season, and a more kind and endearing feeling between different members of the same family, than we often perceive in this country. By way of illustration I will quote an instance to the point: — A woman who was hired as a nurse, lived in my family two years, and during the whole of that period refused receiving any portion of her wages. "If I spend my money now," she would say, "what is to become of me when I can work no longer?" She had, I understood, left, likewise, 500 francs in the hands of her former master, to be taken care of for the same purpose. Two winters ago, when the weather was very severe, she made up her mind to purchase a cloak — good stout substantial cloth was chosen, the bargain made, and when in possession, the greatest care was taken: "For," said she, "this is a sort of purchase that can be made only once in two or three lives, and if it be taken care of, will do for my children and grandchildren after me." I relate these trifling circumstances, not as anecdotes to amuse, but as being descriptive of the manners and habits of the people. I had in my service, at the same time with this woman, several English servants, who were ever in want of money, although receiving double the wages,

which they spent without any regard for the future, in any baubles which chanced to attract their attention. A feather shows not with more accuracy the quarter of the wind, than instances of this description the spirit which leavens society. The state of society is to be judged by the conduct of people, rather in every day life than under particular circumstances. The pulse of a person under great temporary excitement, will, by no means, indicate the real condition of his health. These are facts; where is the cause? I find it in the non-existence of poor laws — this renders, in that country, prudence necessary, while in ours, where they exist, it is not so, *and a care for individual preservation* (which is naturally the most predominent feeling of the human breast) is needless. And as it is but for the sake of individual preservation that property is of any value, *whatever makes a solicitude about the one needless, must necessarily occasion a carelessness about the acquisition of the other; and this, of course, produces a want of respect for the rights of others. To respect the rights of other men, we must needs be solicitous about the preservation of our own.* And such a want of respect for the rights of others, is dangerous to the very existence of civilized society. What is now the case in France, was the case in England within even the memory of man. The poor law was a power capable of ill, which remained dormant, as it were, until the present age, when circumstances have called forth its energies to their full extent. There can be but little doubt but that the unnatural pressure of the national debt was what called into life the long-sown seed of mischief. Mr. Hodges, in his evidence before the committee of the House of Lords, says — "The single men did not care to encumber themselves with marriage, and remained very happily in their masters' families as servants; they allowed their wages to accumulate until they were enabled to marry

with comfort, which they did—and within my own knowledge, with the exception of three or four, I can remember all the farmers in my parish to have sprung from labourers. *But that state of things is entirely gone by, and the labourers are inhabiting cottages instead of residing as they used to do in the families of their masters.*

"To what circumstance do you attribute the disuse of the farmers having men in their own house?

"That occurred in the early part of the war, when the wages rose and the demand for labour in the county of Kent, in consequence of government, was very great. The wages that a servant received in a farmer's family bore no proportion to those he got out of it; he became dissatisfied with his situation, and the farmer, in consequence of the alteration of circumstances and the high prices which prevailed during the war, got above his situation, and was ready to part with all his men, whom he considered rather incumbrances and annoyances to him, *and thus by mutual consent the masters and labourers parted,* I hope, however, to meet again upon the ancient and friendly footing they used to do. Those were really *the good old times.* The origin of this unfortunate change is to be traced to the early part of the late war."

Directly in opposition to what I have shewn must inevitably be the consequence of such perversion of the principle of action, is the boasting of those well-meaning people who contend that the lower classes in England are the most independent, most contented, best fed, most moral, and happiest in the world. What they humanely wish to be, they fondly think is the case. Had not such belief the injurious effect of preventing the proper means being adopted to work a change, I should be sorry to disturb opinions which must cause such inward satisfaction and national pride in the persons who entertain them. But it is not

Mr. Hodges alone who finds them completely changed. I will ask any person of sixty years of age whether he does not recollect that period when it was considered a *disgrace* by those of his own class for a labourer to apply for parish relief. He was considered, if I may use the expression, to lose *caste* by it—would that such were the case now! Necessity in the first place compelled an infringement of this noble feeling of independence, and a continued infringement a disregard for, and at last, an utter ignorance of it. Think not that the abandoned prostitute commences her disgraceful trade with all the impudence and hardihood with which she carries it on at last. The still small voice of conscience, the deep-seated knowledge of right was to be got over, and it was not got over without many a painful struggle at the first; although continued acting in contradiction may have induced at last an almost ignorance of its existence.

Nothing can tend to give a nation a more lofty station in civilization than exalted notions of right and wrong—than those fine-drawn yet distinct boundaries, the violation of which is forbidden and punished by public opinion; when even a slight deviation not only from virtue, but exalted virtue, is held in abhorrence by the united voice of a nation, it speaks volumes for the state of its society.

The legislators of ancient Greece and Rome well understood this, and to their inculcation of it may be attributed not only the splendid examples of public virtue which so often strike us in their histories, but likewise that purity of moral which characterized the better period of their histories.

It is not, however, over the whole of England that corruption has spread; and I here insert with the most heartfelt satisfaction, evidence respecting some of our northern counties, which shews not only that the labourers there

are now in the same condition that they were formerly in the South; but that the poor law has come as yet into very little operation, although, as far as it has, to that extent it has done mischief.

Part of the examination of John Grey, Esq.:—

"In your opinion is the condition of the labouring classes in your own county (Northumberland) preferable to that of the labourers in the South?

"Very much so, I think.

"To what particular cause do you attribute that?

"I apprehend that it may be ascribed in a great measure to the different habits of the people; perhaps in some measure to their education and better information—their intelligence; but chiefly I should think to the manner in which they are engaged, and in which they are paid their wages on farms. I speak of agricultural labourers.

"Will you state the mode of hiring and service in your part of the country?

"The mode of hiring farm servants in my part of the country is this: each farm servant who is a householder, is provided with a cottage and a garden upon the farm upon which he is hired to work. His hiring is from the May of one year to the May of another, annually; and his payment is given very much in grain and in other things which he himself requires for the use of his family; he has a house and a garden free from rent, he has a cow kept on his master's farm, he has a certain quantity of grain given to him, a certain quantity of wool given to him, and some money for himself—and then the younger branches of his family are employed upon the farm; so that the wages and the united earnings of the family under the management of the mother or housekeeper, if they are frugal, give them a comfortable income; and it is rare that any of them apply to the parishes for relief.

"Have you got a statement of the amount of wages at present paid?

"I have. The wages, according to the present price of grain, is estimated to amount to about 38*l.* a year, or perhaps I may take it at 35*l.* a year, the amount of the gains of a married man.

"Have the goodness to state the different heads of payment received by labourers?

"The first article is thirty-six bushels of oats, 6*l.* 12*s.*; twenty-four bushels of barley, 5*l.* 12*s.*; twelve bushels of pease, 3*l.*; three bushels of wheat, 1*l.* 5*s.*; twenty-four pounds of wool which is a very useful article for the women are employed in spinning it into yarn and knitting it into stockings, or send it to be woven into blankets when they would be doing nothing else, 1*l.*; cow's keep for the year 9*l.* The cows are kept in the master's pasture, and they have an allowance of hay; a ton of hay and as much of the best straw as they wish to consume; or if they do not get hay they have an equivalent in turnips. There is a cow-house always annexed to the cottages in which those cows are kept by themselves; then there is a cottage and garden, which I have estimated at 3*l.*, though that does not go out of the farmer's pocket, because, the cottage having been once built by the landlord, the farmer has no expence but to keep it in repair; therefore, though it is worth 3*l.* to the labourer, the farmer does not pay that sum out of his pocket. Coals leading from the pit, 2*l.* 8*s.* That is done by the farmers, according to the distance, that is different; in some situations it is less, in some others it is more. The payment in cash 3*l.* 10*s.* That amounts to 38*l.* 16*s.* or nearly 15*s.* per week, but the price of grain upon which the money value of the wages depends, is higher at the present time than the average of years would amount to. That average would

be about 35*l.* a year. It is worthy of observation, however, that the value of the grain herein stated is exactly what the farmer could obtain for it in the market, *but produces to the servant a much greater quantity of meal than the same sum would purchase for him in small quantities at a retail shop.* Then there are boys employed at three, four, five, six or eight shillings a week as they happen to be grown up; and as it is a district in which turnips are more cultivated, and particularly cleaned and attended to; the females work in the field very much; and in a general way their situation is very good.

What is the mode of life of a hind as to food?

"The grain which he stipulates for, and the quantities of which I have stated, is given him always in advance at the beginning of each quarter. He receives one quarter of his allowance in grain, and there are a great many small mills in the country, at which it is ground at a very cheap rate. In this way they are provided with a sufficiency for a family within their own houses—meal, potatoes, and so on. They seldom have occasion to go to purchase any article they require, unless it is their tobacco and tea, if they indulge in that, to the village or town; and to that we are indebted for the great sobriety and domestic habits of the people; for their leisure hours are occupied in the care of their gardens; and having very little inducement to go away, not having their wages paid in money, they are free from the temptations of spending them in the ale-house; and the people live in a state of remarkable sobriety and simplicity.

"What stock does a hind usually keep?

"Each hind has one cow; it sometimes happens that if a man has more than one son engaged with himself, he has a second cow, which cow is in part of their wages; but there is always one cow to one house; and the refuse of

their family, the produce of their garden, and other things, and the small potatoes they have, enable them regularly to fatten two pigs in the year, which is a great assistance to them.

"Do they drink beer?

"Very rarely; they have milk in their own houses; and their food is generally very different from that of the peasantry in the South; their breakfast is regularly porridge of oatmeal and milk; then they have their bacon and their bread, and their potatoes.

"Do they brew or buy the beer they drink?

"I know no instance of their brewing when they have it, it is supplied by the master in harvest time; but it is not very much which is given to them.

"Do they drink spirits?

"Not much; they are generally very sober. In the experience I have on my own farm, I never remember to have seen one man that was intoxicated. It may happen once or twice a year that they have occasion to go to a fair to buy a pig, and they may drink a little; but their habits are generally very sober.

"Do marriages take place generally at a very early period?

"Not very early. There is one check which I think is very salutary, the custom of being possessed of a cow. It *is not considered a very reputable thing for a young man to marry unless he can be so independent as to furnish a house and get a cow;* when they are able to purchase a cow and furnish a house, they have a degree of independence which enables them to face the world and set up for themselves. It certainly does happen sometimes that there are early and improvident marriages, especially if there is a child in the way; that commonly ends in a marriage; but in such cases it is not unfrequent that there is that connection between master and servant that the master may either lend

him a cow of his own until he is able to get one, or give him a little assistance in purchasing it till he is able to work it out. I have done that, and prefer that mode, because *it is desirable to let a man have a feeling of having property of his own;* for by so doing you encourage a spirit of independence.

"Are hinds fond of changing service?

"Not generally. If they get into a good situation, or under a good service, it is attended with inconvenience; *there are local attachments and habits which are formed that they do not* LIGHTLY *break through:* they are, of course, changing occasionally.

"Have you any statement of the length of service of the different individuals for any particular period?

"Yes; I have made a statement, thinking that question might, perhaps, be asked of the length of service of the hinds upon one particular farm, on which there are thirteen men. *The first has been twenty-five years in that place; the second twelve; the third one; the next thirty; the next nine; the next fourteen; the next four; the next twenty; the next twelve. The average, however, is thirteen years' residence under the same master in the same place.*

"Can you state what half-yearly settlement was made with those individuals at the end of the year?

"I have not here the statement of their earnings for the amount of the year; but I have a statement of what they had left, which they did not find it necessary to draw out of their master's hands during the course of the half year: they have nothing like a weekly payment of money. There is a ledger account kept by the steward or bailiff of the farm; and on the Saturday night, whatever money they receive, or whatever days the extra hands have been employed during the week, such as boys or girls, are entered in his book, and there is an account made up each half

year. It is generally an object to them to live as frugally as they can, and to have a very good account at settling times: they are settled with on the 12th of May and 12th of November. I find that at Martinmas last the first person here had to receive from his master 8*l.* 3*s.* 6½*d.*; the second 15*l.* 5*s.* 9½*d.*; that was a man who had a son working at weekly wages: this amount they had left in their master's hands, and had to draw out in one sum to pay their shoe bills, and whatever they wanted. The next 9*l.* 7*s.* 11½*d.*; the next 5*l.* 5*s.* 9½*d.*; 7*l.* 14*s.* 4½*d.*; 23*l.* 2*s.* 2½*d.*; in that case the man had two sons, the one receiving 5*s.* a week, and the other 4*s.* a week, and a certain quantum of corn besides.—*They are always anxious to have as much paid in kind as will keep them out of the market*; if they conceive they have not that from the men's wages, they are desirous to have it on the sons: in this instance, the young man had so much grain, and 4*s.* a week, instead, probably, of 8*s.* a week. The next is 4*l.* 3*s.* 11*d.*; 6*l.* 12*s.* 4½*d.*; 7*l.* 2*s.* 5½*d.*; 5*l.* 15*s.* 1*d.*; 5*l.* 16*s.* 7*d.*; 4*l.* 9*s.* 10½*d.* Then comes one who was in debt to his master 7*l.* 9*s.* 8*d.* The reason of this person being indebted to his master, instead of having a sum of money to receive from him, was this: he had had the misfortune to lose a valuable cow by death, and, being unable to purchase another, having a large family, was indebted to his master for the loan of 10*l.*, to enable him to do so; which loan, it is understood, he is to pay off by instalments as he can afford, which, as his family gets to be useful, he will have it in his power to do. The existence of this kind of confidence and accommodation may be adduced as one of the beneficial effects of the system herein explained: a master, in such a case, frequently gives the servant the use of one of his cows, until he can procure one for himself; but the servant is always anxious to have the credit of having a cow

of his own, and it would be absurd not to give every encouragement to the maintenance of so laudable a spirit.

" Have they often recourse to parochial relief?

" No; very seldom.

" Do they feel a pride in supporting their relations who are disabled?

" In general they do; but the master generally supports his servants in time of sickness. *The man being hired for the year, his wages go on, though he is unable to work for several weeks together*, he has no deduction made from his wages by his master. That may appear a little hard, perhaps, on the individual master: *but it comes to the same thing, whether he supports his own servant, or is called on to contribute to the support of all persons in a similar situation in the parish; and it does not subject the person, who has the misfortune of being deprived of health, to the degradation of applying to the parish:* and instead of claiming that as his right, he receives with thankfulness the assistance during his illness from his master, and that often induces him, on his recovery, to make exertions afterwards. I have heard men express themselves in this way: 'You have had a bad bargain of me during my illness, and I must do all I can to help you.'

" What is the amount of rates in the pound in your parish?

" This particular parish is divided into townships; and some of the townships, which are peculiarly agricultural, have scarcely any rate at all; sixpence in the pound upon the rental, would probably pay the whole. The hinds are exempt from the uncertainties of high and low prices, because although, of course, their earnings are not of equal value in money when corn is very low, yet the quantum of meal which the grain produces is the same; and when the corn is very high, they are exempt from the poverty

which would otherwise accompany a money rate of wages. There is another remark which it may be proper to make, that, in receiving as wages a quantum of grain (which they get ground at a very cheap rate), besides the temptation of spending money in public-houses when they go to purchase their weekly food, they are saved all the intermediate profits of the meal dealer and baker; and I apprehend the quantity of grain given to those people, though it may cost the farmer fifteen or sixteen pounds, would probably cost the labourer twenty pounds if he purchased it in small quantities of meal or in loaves.

"Has he the option to take either the grain or the market price of the grain?

"The master is bound to deliver him his grain, but he is not bound to buy it back of him. It often happens that the servants will prefer selling to the miller; but in my own case, I am in the habit, and I believe it is a very general thing, if they have any surplus grain, to give them an allowance for it at the end of the half year. Of course the grain delivered to the servant is always the best which the farm produces; and that has one salutary effect, that it gives the servants an interest in the working of this grain, and in the preserving it in a good condition; and, instead of grumbling in bad weather at working extra hours in harvest, they have all an interest in preserving it in good order.

"Do you think that the introduction of the poor laws has deteriorated the condition of the labourers in your neighbourhood or not?

"It clearly has deteriorated the condition of the poor in our neighbourhood, in so far as respects persons not regularly hired as farm servants. I am happy to say it has not so much encroached on the habits and feelings of the farm servants.

"The hinds in your part of the country have always been very loyal and very quiet, have they not?

"They have always been very quiet. *They would as soon think of burning their own houses as of burning the stacks.*

"Do the families eat barley or wheaten bread?

"Not very much of wheaten bread; it is generally two-thirds barley and one-third pease."

CHAP. VI.

That the Poor Laws are calculated to, and do, create an unnatural Demand for useless Population—while, at the same time, they are calculated to, and do, create an unnatural Diminution of the Demand for useful Industry.

If, as it is asserted, the population of this country, or a part of this country, be too large, or, in other words, the supply of labour be greater than the market for it, there is in my opinion little difficulty in accounting for the circumstance. *Population ever varies in magnitude according to the means of sustaining it.* The natural alternative is — go elsewhere and prosper, or stay here and starve. When such is the case, it is not difficult to point out which would be preferred — where, but in England, was ever a poor and niggard soil thickly inhabited? or a town ill situated for commerce or manufactures swarming with population? Untenanted huts are invariably found in the one, and deserted mansions in the other. But our poor laws create improper and unnatural means of sustaining population, by giving a portion of the product of one man's labour to another, which, were they to become so extended as to swallow up the whole rent of the land, (and I have no doubt but that unless some remedy

can be devised they will) the population would rise not only up to it but beyond it, and for this reason there would up to that point exist no necessity for change of place.

Make an excavation as deep, as wide, as extensive as you please by the side of a river, the river will fill the excavation to the brim, and then flow on in as large a body as ever. This river is the stream of population; the excavation by its side is the poor law, which, extensive and deep as it is, its sides are now overflowed, and encroachments daily made upon the adjacent country, while in the great body of the stream there is no sensible diminution. Other circumstances may have the same effect as the poor rates, and of them none operate in a more striking manner than charitable bequests, as the following evidence will shew:

Part of the examination of Mr. R. Wardroper.

"What is the extent of the parish of Midhurst, in Sussex?

"407 acres.

"What was the population in 1821?

"1335.

"Has that population increased since?

"I apprehend it has.

"Was there ever any particular trade in that place?

"Not within my recollection.

"To what do you attribute the large population of it compared with the acreage?

"I have not the means of answering that question; but we have a considerable charity in the place, and we are induced to think that many persons are induced to settle themselves with a view of partaking of that charity.

"To what amount is that charity?

"About 200*l.* per annum.

"What is the rental of the parish?

"About 2,500*l.* a year — a little more.

"What was the sum raised in the parish last year?

"I do not know the sum raised, but I know the sum expended: the sum expended was upwards of 1,700*l.*"

An ingenious arithmetician might, I think, calculate with tolerable accuracy, for it is but an affair of figures, how long it will be before the surplus population be so increased as to swallow up the rent of the land, the savings of industry, and the reward of enterprize — how long, in fact, before it destroyed civilized society, unless some expedient can be devised to avert the evil. In looking over a late number of a provincial journal, I find that it states the population of the county town and of all of the adjacent villages to have increased in an extraordinary manner within the memory of man. This is, I beg leave to say, in a neighbourhood that, were wages to be regulated by the demand for labour, they would not amount to the cost of existence. The editor looks at the fact with pleasure, and considers it a proof that we have increased in a similar ratio in trade, wealth, and prosperity. Would to God that I could arrive at a similar conclusion, or that any person could prove to me that this enormous accession of numbers in particular localities has augmented the happiness of society. That it would have done so I am ready to admit, had that population been called for by an ever-augmenting demand for labour, and not by unnatural and artificial circumstances. This increase of population is not the production of an improved and cultivated soil, but a sickly exotic maintained in a drooping existence by the application of preternatural heat, to the great cost and injury of those who maintain it.

But while the poor laws increase the population beyond the natural means of sustaining it, it ought to be remembered, that although they increase the number of paupers,

they diminish the number of industrious labourers; for the money which is spent in the support of discontented mendicants in idleness would otherwise be employed in promoting useful industry. This point was distinctly proved by T. L. Hodges, Esq. before the committee; for when his parish was relieved of ten idlers by emigration, they found themselves relieved to the extent of fifteen — as the relief from payment of rates created a power of demand, and a demand for five hands which could not previously be employed.

It is not numbers alone which give a strength to a nation — there is such a thing as *quality* as well as *quantity*. The number of industrious population can never be too great, and it has been said with much truth, "Quand il est question d' estimer la puissance publique le bel esprit visite les palais du prince, ses troupes, ses ports, ses arsenaux, ses villes — le vrai politique parcourt les terres et va dans le chaumiere du laboureur. Le premier voit ce qu'on a fait et le second ce qu'on peut faire." Population composes doubtless the strength of a nation, but it is the industrious population.

In the natural course of things, when population is not tampered with, "What is the characteristic of a populous country? Many people, but *labour dear*.—What the mark of a country thinly peopled? Few people, and *labour cheap*." — (Arthur Young). Population is called together by the natural means, and its moral condition is healthy; there is a demand for labour, and all is activity; there is a market for their produce, and all are rich. But the poor laws call population together by unnatural means, and their moral condition is unhealthy; there is no demand for labour; all is idleness; no market for produce, and all are poor.

If natural causes are left to operate, men will take their labour to the best market for it. This is much impeded in

England, even within the country, (so as to render it an extremely difficult matter to come to an accurate conclusion respecting over-population, whether it be general or local,) by our rule of settlement, which obliges parishes to support the *settled poor*. To say nothing of the tyranny of confining people to particular spots, rendering them in fact serfs to the soil, it must be most injurious to a country to prevent industry being freely carried to those points where it may be employed to the greatest advantage, and where it can be so employed is best found out by those who have industry to dispose of. In ancient Egypt, there was a law which obliged children to follow the profession of their fathers, be it what it might, and however unsuitable to their capacities or inclinations, or even one which was before overstocked, and in which they could not possibly expect to find employment. I much question whether it was so absurd to confine a man's labour to one object as to confine it to one spot.

CHAP. VII.

What is the Law of Relief?

The whole of the law relating to the provision of the poor is derived from the original statute of Elizabeth. The statutes which have succeeded have not materially affected it in any of its leading features, the principle has not in any way been changed, and they, as well as the proposed alterations, are but clumsy provisions made with a view to obviate effects, without any reference to the cause from which they sprung. Taking them one after another, they are but temporary expedients—making the wound deeper,

although affording relief for the time being; they are like the drams of a drunkard, which counteract for a time the exhaustion produced by the last debauch, while their ultimate effect is to farther weaken the constitution; or the loans of the prodigal, which, although they enable him to launch forth in his accustomed frivolities, eat the principle of his resources, and shorten his career. Let me, as briefly as I can, enumerate the provisions of this law, and the subsequent enactments.

The 43rd Elizabeth is to enable, or rather compel, the overseers, with the consent of two justices, (1) *to set to work the children of all such whose parents* shall not be able to maintain them, (2) to raise by weekly or other taxation money to purchase necessary ware and stuff *to set the poor on work*, (3) and also competent sums of money for the *necessary relief of the lame, impotent, old, and such other among them being poor and not able to work*, (4) and for putting out such children to be apprentices, (5) and to execute all other things as well for the disposing of the said stock as otherwise concerning the said premises, as to them shall seem convenient. However good it might be in intention, nothing could possibly be devised more mischievous than the principle of this statute. *The obliging parish officers to set persons to work, is to compel them to create a market for labour which does not exist, and to create a demand for population which has no foundation in reality.* Of the different clauses, there is one only which would not have this effect, viz., the one which compels a provision for the old, the lame, the blind, and the impotent; and even the whole of this is not altogether unexceptionable. I do approve of providing for the *lame and blind*, because the so doing would not have the effect of creating an improper demand for population, while good

would be done to the individuals whom accidental circumstances have rendered incapable of assisting themselves. I doubt, however, the policy of making a provision for the old; would not this have the effect of checking providence in youth, than which nothing can be more injurious? With regard to the impotent, the word requires explanation; impotent may mean an hundred things—an old man is impotent—a man who cannot find work is impotent—and a sick man is impotent: in the last sense alone ought it to be construed. Subsequent decisions in court prove the *obligation of giving relief when labour cannot be found;* they were not, however, called for, as such is a necessary consequence of the above quoted statute—*the principle was established when it says, set the poor to work.*

Chief Justice Abbott says, "Before we determine whether the overseers were or were not justified in giving pecuniary relief to the unemployed poor, the case must go to the sessions again, that we may be informed whether any, and if any, what endeavours were made to procure employment for them. All that the court can now say is, that undoubtedly it is the primary duty of the overseers to find employment for the poor if possible." Justice Bayley "suggested that it was the bounden duty of the overseers to obtain work for the poor, if they could, either in or out of their own parish; and it was only in case of inability to procure work, that they would be justified in giving relief in money."

Thus we find these learned judges startled at the idea of the obligation of giving—but still thinking it most advisable to create an uncalled for demand for labour. To be sure they must be considered as only expounding the law, and not speaking of its expediency; for it is scarcely possible such a man as Lord Tenterden should not be aware how wrong it is in principle.

The following is the purport of the succeeding statutes:— 43 Eliz. for erecting houses for the poor; 3 Car. 1. enabling overseers to set up trades for the benefit of the poor; 19 Geo. 1. for overseers to contract for the maintenance of the poor; 36 Geo. 3. enabling one justice to order relief to paupers in their own houses for a period not exceeding one month, and two justices for a further time; 57 Geo. 3. to borrow money to carry on public works with; 59 Geo. 3. enabling parishes to hire or purchase land upon which to employ the poor, not exceeding twenty acres. Thus most of the additional provisions are of late date, and appear to tend to one point, viz. to shew that the number of paupers was an ever increasing burden which continually required the bounds of the statute which provided for them to be enlarged, in order to relieve existing distress; and as it became enlarged, the demand for relief swelled beyond the bounds of that enlargement. Of them all, not one appears to go to the root of the evil — not one seems to question the propriety of creating an unnatural demand for labour. That in olden times they did not perceive the impropriety of creating a demand for population beyond the wants of the country, is not at all extraordinary; — an evil so far distant, and in that stage of society so improbable, was not likely to be anticipated, even by the most sagacious. Politicians then were rather afraid of deficiency in numbers; they provided alone for the evil which was upon them. In Russia, at this moment, capital punishment is rarely had recourse to, even in cases of great enormity: this proceeds, however, not so much from lenity as a desire to increase population, without any regard to the means. The statute passed in the 8 and 9 of William relating to the badging those dependent upon parish relief has been repealed by the 50th Geo. 3. However unpopular the affixing such a mark might be, I contend that

it was right. Those who are living upon alms should be humble enough publicly to acknowledge it. The repeal of this statute helped much to break down the barrier of opinion. Upon the same principle I should like to badge those receiving from the high class poor-book, the pension list,—a red, a blue, or a yellow stocking might let us know who they were. He who had earned his annuity by past services, would be no more ashamed of being thus distinguished than a Chelsea pensioner. It is only when distinction is a mark of disgrace that people are solicitous of avoiding it.

So much for the statutes. Now with regard to regulations talked of or proposed to the legislature. The first is Lord Winchelsea's bill to enable parishes to levy a rate for the employment of the poor during the winter months. This might have done as a temporary measure, but in principle it is as wrong as the original law, and would be attended with inconveniences as great. As there is scarcely time to bring any permanent measure into operation before next winter, it might, perhaps, be as well to have some such law to occupy the idle hands for the time being. Lord Teynham's bill likewise neglects the principle, and is for the regulation of detail—it is feeble. While a member of the House of Commons has proposed to give parishes the power of taking in hand forty acres of land instead of twenty: thus again we have the same error. There are many others, and all, I think, equally wide of the real object.

Magistrates have been much found fault with for sanctioning the different ratios of relief proposed by parishes. I really am unable to see how they can act otherwise than they do. They have to administer, not make, the law. *By the law, work must be found, or relief given:* now, if they relieve them, the relief of course must rationally be

in proportion to the distress — if they give them work, the earnings cannot possibly be, as in ordinary cases, in proportion to the value of the work, but rather in proportion to the wants of the individual — and why? The work given is not such as is wanted to be done, but rather such as is created solely for the sake of employing persons whose labour is not actually wanted — such as is actually carved out for the express purpose of letting them do something for what is given, rather than they should remain in a state of idleness. It is, in fact, a donation of the money, the work performed being frequently of so useless a nature to the employer as not to be taken into consideration. As a case in point, the following was a reply of the Rev. J. Beard, magistrate for the county of Bedford, to a question of the committee of Lords: — "Last year, in mere gravel-digging, the parish of Kempston expended the sum of 750*l.* I am sure I am not saying too much, when I state I could get the same gravel dug for 50*l.*" — As, then, the earnings are given as a relief, and not as a purchase of labour or money's worth, because the employer wants that labour, the parish officer considers rather the necessities of the man than the labours of the workman. This has of course had the effect of altogether cheapening labour, and farmers have followed the example of parishes. Farmers, strictly speaking, are not to blame for giving as little as they can. *In a healthy state of society, wages are not regulated by the employer's liberality, but by the value of labour in the market;* all beyond the market price of labour, which is voluntarily paid, is so much given in charity. If I purchase a bushel of wheat, or a pair of stockings, I pay for either article according to the market price, which price is regulated by the proportion between the supply and the demand: but if, in consequence of the distressed circumstances of the artizan or agriculturist, I consent to

give more than I am obliged to do, who will doubt that my act is voluntary, even though a family be saved from starvation by it? How the case of the labourer differs I am unable to discover, although a distinction has, I understand, be drawn. Labour is always of sufficient value to sustain an industrious man and his family with at least comfort, if it does not afford him the means of rising in the world, which it ought to do. In England, the real market price of labour is too small for subsistence, so that in paying a labourer it is now considered, not what he has earned, but how much it is possible for him to subsist upon. The measure of subsistence is becoming the price of the labour of the English peasant, as it is of the slave of the West Indies.

"Committee.—What is the general food of the labourers in your part of the country (Bedford)?

"Rev. J. Beard.—Nothing but bread.

"What have they to drink?

"Water.

"They have no cheese?

"No.

"No tea?

"Very little. I have watched one-and-twenty men dine together; I have seen twenty of them eat bread with what we call seam, which is a little fat rendered down.

"No potatoes?

"No.

"Where did you see them dine together?

"At the gravel-pit.

"What have they in their cottages when they dine there?

"They very rarely do.

"What have their families?

"From what I have seen, I should think the women bread and tea."

Such is the fruit which the lower classes have reaped from the operation of the poor laws. Compare this with the condition of the labourers in Northumberland, where they have not yet come into full play.

These and similar abuses, which have the effect of so thoroughly degrading the lower classes, cannot possibly be remedied by the exertions of insulated individuals — no, nor can the legislature itself remedy it by attacking each particular evil: that law can alone be a specific which strikes at the root, and restores activity to the natural principles of labour, of industry, of population, and of wealth, which, whenever paralyzed, must inevitably bring down distress to the extent of the disease. If money continue to be demanded for any thing but for work done, or work to be obtained without being wanted, without the existence of a market, and one man to take as a right what another man has earned and is in possession of, (for let it be borne in mind that property is the representative of the accumulated earnings of labour) without giving an equivalent for it — sooner or later, and I fear sooner, all just ideas of the right of possession must be overturned; and those ideas once overturned, where is society?

Since writing the above, I have read the evidence of Thomas Walker, Esq. and the Rev. T. Whately, and have duly appreciated their administration of the poor laws. They certainly have effected more than I should have thought it possible. *But how have they effected it? By acting in direct opposition to the very spirit of the law itself.* Mr. Walker distinctly says *he acted as though the law were not in existence;* so that in reality their evidence does not at all affect the truth of what I have said. The particulars of the evidence, as it is most important, shall be given later.

CHAP. VIII.

The manner in which the Rates have increased.

But it is said, our ancestors bore the poor rates without complaint — why should we grumble? True — but consider their increase. "In the year 1773," says Arthur Young, "poor rates averaged, in the North of England, 1s. 1d.; in the East, 2s. 8d.; in the manufacturing districts they were somewhat higher." This was but fifty-eight years ago: what is the fact now? There are districts, I know, in which the rates, however increased, are not yet intolerable. Now I myself know a neighbourhood where there is not any manufacture — where the population is purely agricultural: property is laid ordinarily at two-thirds, and the poor rates are from 10*s.* to 15*s.* in the pound, and I have heard of a case in which they have amounted to 20*s.*

The examination of Mr. R. Holloway of Shipley, in the weald of Sussex, before the committee of the Lords: —

"What have been the rates for the last ten years?

"I am not able to state that at present — I expect the last four or five years they have been as high as 20*s.* in the pound.

"What were they in the last year?

"Twenty-four shillings.

"Upon what valuation?

"Two-thirds of the value. — I paid last year for a farm for which I pay 160*l.* a year, 120*l.* poor rate.

"In point of fact, will the two-thirds of that valuation so taken twelve years ago, be very much below the actual rent paid now?

"No, it is not very much below the actual rent paid now.

"Upon that you pay 24*s.* in the pound?

"Yes.

Evidence of R. M. Bacon, Esq.

"Have you any documents which will shew the relation between employed and unemployed labourers in any district in Norfolk?

"Mr. Richardson, a person of considerable property and experience, and the agent of Mr. Bulwer of Heyden, has published the accounts of eight parishes; and from these it appears that 5824*l.* 10*s.* had been the expense for the poor in these eight parishes; and that to able-bodied labourers, for want of work on the roads, there has been paid 3,354*l.* 1*s.* 9*d.*, namely, about three-fifths of the whole sum, for the mere support of idleness.

"In one parish, the following are some of the details:—

948 acres—714*l.* valuation—amount of rate, 366*l.* 13*s.* 3*d.*

How the rate was expended.

	£	s.	d.
Paid to widows, old men unable to work, and children	60	0	0
To labourers and their families in illness	21	5	10
For medical aid	19	9	0
Clothing for the poor	17	6	6
County rate	9	10	0
Carpenter, for barrows and coffins—constables' expences	5	4	6
Overseers' expenses	4	5	0
House rent	10	0	0
To labourers out of work, on the roads, and meal money for children	219	12	5
	366	13	3
Deduct 8*l.* a year sufficient to keep the roads in repair	8	0	0
	£358	13	3

"Have you made any computation relative to the unemployed in agriculture and in manufactures?

"In 1812, by looking at Mr. Colquhoun's book on the resources of Great Britain, and, as far as I have been able to examine his statement, which I have done in many instances where I could prove whether they were false or true, I found him correct. I find he states the number of paupers (four in a family) were then 4,548,400; the number of labourers in agriculture and mines, 3,154,142. To those families he reckons four and a half; therefore, he imagines a failure of one-half a person in each family, owing to the difference of their condition; that pauperism would produce a loss, that is to say, of one-ninth of the population. He reckons the artizans at 4,343,339. He estimated the poor rate at that time at six millions; it now amounts to about seven millions and a half; therefore, we may suppose the pauper population has increased about one-seventh from that period; but the computation would be affected by the high prices of provision at that time, and the allowances to the poor which have been since carried into effect.

"In Northumberland, according to the account of John Grey, Esq., the rates are ordinarily about six-pence in the pound."

CHAP. IX.

That the Agriculturists even now find the greatest Difficulty in paying the rates.

But why talk of the amount of rates; it is said, you are rich enough to bear them? To this I answer, that I know a clergyman who offered his tithes for his rates, no longer back than last year: and that from small parishes, I have seen several individuals continually summoned for non-

payment of rates — men who for years have maintained characters for respectability and honesty, and who would not have allowed such a disgrace to have fallen upon them could they possibly have avoided it. In addition to this, I am acquainted with a gentleman who, although unable to collect his tithe, was obliged to pay a rate upon it, a rate upon a loss.

Committee—" Do you happen to know whether in your parish the farmers pay with difficulty the present amount of poor rate?

The Rev. J. Beard, of Bedfordshire—" The greatest possible: that is to say, that several of them are summoned every time the rate is claimed."

Whether, now, we look to their amount in comparison with what it was but fifty-eight years ago, their tendency even still to increase, and the present and daily increasing difficulty experienced in paying them, the consideration is truly frightful.

CHAP. X.

What are the ideas entertained by the labouring classes respecting the rates?

Nor is the consideration more cheering when we look to what the ideas of the poor are respecting the rates; for they too have their ideas upon the subject, and imagine that the parish is obliged to enter into the details of their minutest wants, and to supply them. Should a pair of sheets be wanting the parish must find them. The repair even of culottes and petticoats is made a parish business; so utterly helpless are the poor become. I knew a fellow tear a part

of his dress to annoy the parish, and a woman refuse a gown because it was not smart enough — a refinement in mendicity this! Again, a pauper applied to me to summon the overseer of his parish.

"Please your honour I've got a wife and three small children; and they wont do anything for me.

"How's that my friend, have you not any employment?

"Yes; the parish gives me a little work.

"How much do they pay you?

"Only 16s. a week.

"Who finds your house?

"The parish.

"Has the parish done anything else for you?

"Why to be sure they did just pay a little bill of 3*l.* or 4*l.* last year for clothes; but I want some blankets and some baby clothes, and a good many other things which they will not give me; besides I owe 16*s.* at the grocer's which I want them to pay."

Such are a few of the particular instances which have come within my own personal observation; and I believe them to be a fair sample of the opinion of the labouring classes throughout the South of England. Of those who acknowledge the condition of the lower classes to be what it is—most deplorable—there are those who propose remedying it by a repeal of any restrictions upon the importation of foreign corn, and say, if the people have cheap bread they must of course become contented; while another party think nothing so cogent as compulsion or effectual as penal enactments.

CHAP. XI.

That a Repeal of the Corn Laws, so far from being beneficial to the Labouring Classes under the present circumstances of the country, would have the effect of making the Demand for Labour even smaller than it now is, and consequently increasing the General Distress.

To those who urge that the distresses of the poor are to be relieved by diminishing the price of corn, by doing away with the corn laws, I reply, never was there a greater fallacy, or one which, if acted upon, would produce more certain distress throughout the country. Little does it signify to the labourer what may be the price of corn; he is alone concerned in the market for labour, which will be good or bad in proportion to the supply of labour.

That indeed would be an enactment of vast benefit to the poor man, which although it reduced the price of bread would entirely destroy his capability of purchasing it. That indeed would be a salutary change for him, which would throw the land of his parish out of cultivation, which, poor as it may be, is still, however, rich enough to give him employment, and subsistence, besides supporting the landlord, the farmer, the clergy, and paying I know not how much in rates and taxes of various kinds. Author Young not only asserts that a high price for provisions is not injurious to the lower classes, but likewise that it is for their benefit.

Dr. Campbell, in describing the great plenty in the Maldives says, "The natives, it is true, do not grow rich, and that I take to proceed from their cheap and easy living, which encourages them to negligence and idleness;" and of Siam he says, "The peasants lead a miserable life by reason that provisions are so cheap here, that they cannot get any thing by their labour." These observations are, I think, grounded on sound philosophy; for where Nature by

her bounty has precluded the necessity of toil in acquiring what is indispensable to existence, a man's ingenuity is not put to the rack to ensure self-preservation; he necessarily becomes an indolent, lazy, mischievous, and cowardly animal.

Non è gente robusta o faticosa
* * * *
La terra molle e lieta e dilettosa
Simili a se gli abiti produce.

"From the year 1730 to 1756 corn was so amazingly cheap in England that this nation ought not to wish ever to see such another period. During the whole of it complaints were incessant through every part of the kingdom of the decay and ruin of manufactures."

"'By the sweat of thy brow shalt thou eat bread,' and the countries where the doing so is necessary have ever produced the noblest specimens of the human race. When it was necessary for them to exert themselves to procure the necessaries of life, the Spaniards held a most exalted situation among the nations of Europe. Their degradation may be dated from the discovery of the new world, and the mines of gold, which poured for a time every luxury into their country without calling for any exertion on their part. Spain has now scarcely a place among the powers of Europe."

That peace and good understanding should exist among nations is necessary for the happiness of their respective inhabitants; and I rejoice to see the more enlightened portion of society begin to open their eyes to the only solid foundation on which they can be established.

Free trade is a contract of peace, more firm and binding than ever yet was ratified by treaty. It is grounded upon individual interest: it comes home to self, and that, indeed, must be an urgent reason for war, which would induce nations to disregard it. At the present moment, what can be more absurd, than that two countries, separated only by the small space of twenty miles, and producing

each those commodities necessary to the other, should neglect to maintain a friendly intercourse for mutual advantage. It is singular; and so long as neighbouring nations are determined to exist independent of each other, and reject those ties which their reciprocal wants naturally engender — so long will trivial circumstances be considered sufficient cause for involving them in war and bloodshed. Although, as a general principle, free trade is a good, I do not think it allowable with regard to the necessaries of life, when its practice has the effect of discouraging the cultivation of land. Mr. M'Culloch says, and Sir H. Parnell, in his for the most part excellent and sound work, entitled Financial Reform, agrees with him,— "That Providence, by giving different soils, climates and natural productions to different countries, evidently intended that they should be mutually serviceable to each other." I, too, entertain this opinion, but with a qualification, and say, Providence has given the different superfluities which minister to comfort and to luxury to different nations; that they may mutually be serviceable to each other; that a bond of peace and union may exist, — but that he has made every habitable country from one pole to the other capable of producing the necessaries of life that each may be independent. Scarcity proceeding from inclement seasons, from war, intestine commotion, and other circumstances may afflict the most productive countries — those very countries from which you are accustomed to derive your sustenance; and is it likely that when they have not enough for themselves, they would quietly allow the little corn that remains to be exported for the benefit of another nation? To fly back to our own uncultivated property would be of little avail: it is a shorter business to break one's leg than set it again. These are general reasons why every nation should encourage agriculture:

but we have some more particularly our own, as the land bears a more than proportionate share of the burdens of the country. Kill but the ass that bears it, and the load must either be left in the road, or placed upon other shoulders.

Committee of Lords. — " Did the manufacturers at all contribute to those rates by which they (their own workmen) were paid?

Thomas Walker, Esq.—" No; they were weavers living in cottages, and the manufacturers whom they served were living in another parish: consequently they were maintained by poor rate, to which the man who had the benefit of their labour did not contribute."

I do not take up the cudgels to defend the precise regulations with regard to corn now in existence, as I do not think they sufficiently protect the farmer; but I do say that whatever would have the effect of diminishing agricultural industry, would be highly injurious to every class of society. An enlightened foreigner has said, and let us not forget it—commerce gives a splendour, but agriculture a solidity to a nation. I may be prejudiced, but I think that, in every country, the classes connected with agriculture have a manly singleness of character which, however blunt, is infinitely more to be depended upon than the more polished, but, at the same time, more sophisticated character of the inhabitants of towns, — I think that they are the most moral portion of the community. The intercourse of a town may quicken the capabilities of the head, but it also dulls the feelings of the heart. The heat and confinement of a crowded manufactory must, and evidently does, impair the health: and as the sympathy between the mind and body is so great, that the one cannot be injured without a corresponding effect being produced upon the other, I should much doubt whether the benefits of intercourse were not more than counterbalanced by the lessened capability of taking advantage of them.

An opinion has got abroad, and I regret to say that opinion has been sanctioned by some whose judgment on other matters is entitled to the greatest weight, viz. that agriculture has been fostered to the prejudice of manufacture. I deny it. If the prosperity of the manufactures depend upon the extent of the market for their produce, and the most certain and best market is that which is at home, whatever has the effect of decreasing the number of these consumers, or of curtailing their power of demand, must be productive of injury to the manufacturer. Now as a very great proportion of the home consumers are those connected with the cultivation of the land, I am at a loss to understand how the manufacturers are to be benefited by whatever may have the effect of throwing land out of cultivation. To me it appears that whatever gives an impulse to the one, must have a similar effect upon the other. Experience, in fact, proves this; for when was that period when farmers were thriving, that the manufacturer was not so likewise.

Together, upon the same foundation, do all the interests of this country stand, and together will they fall.

CHAP. XII.

That Over-severity, so far from effecting Good, would be injurious.

A WORD now to those who think nothing so effective as punishment, and that what cannot be brought about by kindness, may be compelled by severity: who, if they could thunder,

As Jove himself does, Jove would ne'er be quiet;
For every pelting, petty officer
Would use his heaven for thunder—nothing but thunder.

Montesquieu says, and Blackstone quotes him, "that punishment for crime should be rather certain than severe." If severity were sufficient, our criminal code speaks enough for the efficiency of our law and activity of our legislature; for no less than 223 offences have been made capital in 450 years: little distinction is made between the different degrees of crime. Death is awarded to the stealer of a horse or even a sheep, while more cannot be awarded to him who kills a man. This sentence, to be sure, is seldom carried into execution for the minor offences; but then it ought not to be the law of England; for its not being executed, makes it an object rather of derision than of fear.

> We have strict statutes, and most biting laws,
> Which for these fourteen years we have let sleep.
> ——————————Now, as fond fathers,
> Having bound up the threatening twigs of birch,
> Only to stick it in their children's sight
> For terror, not for use; in time the rod
> Becomes more mocked than feared—so our decrees,
> Dead to infliction, to themselves are dead,
> And liberty plucks justice by the nose;
> The baby beats the nurse, and quite athwart
> Goes all decorum.

Besides, I do not like putting power, not intended to be used, into so many person's hands; the time may come when, like Angelo in 'Measure for Measure,' some one with less feeling for humanity than is now possessed by our judges and monarchs, might wish to visit each offence with the severest penalty of the law. But, supposing the last punishment were dealt out unsparingly on every occasion, it would effect but little, as it is notorious, that in those countries where punishment is severest, crime is deepest in dye.

CHAP. XIII.

The Remedy of a Disorder is suggested by a Consideration of the Cause of it —what, in the present case, is the Course to pursue.

ALTHOUGH under a conviction that the poor laws, as they now exist, are not only a burden which, increasing daily as it does, will, in a short time, become altogether insupportable—but also that the lower classes are most utterly degraded and debased thereby, I know it is an easier matter to shew the existence of evil, and cavil at the expedients of others, than suggest what would effect a remedy. It is, therefore, with much diffidence, that I now mention what I think would, probably, have this effect.

It is simply this — Taking it as a principle allowed, that population varies in proportion to the existing support for it, and that the poor rates, by creating an unnatural support — a fictitious demand for population, have increased it beyond the natural demand. The method to proceed upon is evident. —

1stly, To increase the natural demand for labour.

2dly, To diminish the number of population.

3dly, To improve the moral condition of the labourers.

4thly, To prevent a recurrence of the evil, by an abolition of the law which originated it.

As it is according to the number of its industrious inhabitants that the prosperity of a country is to be calculated, any measure which would have the effect of creating a healthy and natural demand for the now superfluous population would be infinitely preferable to any which reduced the numbers to the existing demand, by the removal of the redundant; for the more people there are producing a sufficiency for their own support, the greater will be the

activity of internal commerce, the greater the means and facility of obtaining an honest livelihood for every one, and the greater the revenue which can be raised without pressing heavily upon individuals in case of contingent emergencies; while every individual capable of maintaining himself, who leaves this country, diminishes the market for produce, and consequently curtails the means of existence of other people besides diminishing the national revenue to the extent that he is a consumer of articles subject to taxation. The case is, however different, if, from being incapable of supporting himself, he is consuming what belongs to another, and would have been consumed by that other: an injury is done to an individual without any benefit accruing to the state. That there are a number at this moment incapable of supporting themselves, may, however arise, partially at any rate, from causes which may be removed. The population, although apparently redundant, may not be so much so in reality — it may be locally and not generally; some unnatural causes may have diminished the demand for labour in even those localities, which, should they be removed, the population might not be found too great for the real demand. *And it may be the case, (and in my opinion it is the case) that there are two contradictory and equally injurious principles at this moment in operation — the one creating an unnatural demand for population, the other creating an unnatural contraction of the natural demand for labour: the first will, in reality, create a superfluous population — the other will make that superfluity appear greater than it really is.*

CHAP. XIV.

How the natural Demand for Labour is to be increased, by lessening the Weight of Taxes.

Firstly, taxation is that contribution from each individual in a state towards defraying the expenses necessarily incurred to secure to each and all protection for the property they may have acquired, or are acquiring; and although no reasonable person can doubt the propriety of a contribution of such a nature, it is the public duty of every man to directly oppose the levying of any larger sum than is necessary for that purpose, as, by degrees, the original object may be forgotten, and the amount of the contributions become a greater evil than the protection is a good: besides, it does not often occur that the protection is the more efficient in proportion to the largeness of the cost. The next point most carefully to be attended to is, that every individual should bear a portion of the public burden in proportion to the benefit he derives, that is, the extent of the property protected. To this rule there should be no exception, as an undue consideration for one would have the effect of increasing the burden of another. And the third — that as there are different methods of levying contributions, and some are more objectionable and injurious than others, they ought to be all carefully considered, and those selected which would afford the least inconvenience to the community at large. As direct taxes are so much substracted from a man's power of demand for labour, the augmentation of their amount must be injurious to the labourer, inasmuch as it diminishes the market for his labour; and as the indirect taxes increase the price of the comforts and necessaries of life, they take away so much

from the earnings of his labour in lessening the quantity he can purchase with it. To that degree, therefore, that taxation can be reduced, to that degree will the market for labour be increased.

Let me pause to start and answer an objection. Although government takes so much from such and such individuals, it is said that no injury is done to the state, because it is returned again into circulation when those who are in its employment are paid, so that in fact the state is not in the least richer or poorer on account of the amount of taxation. In the first place, it is a fact that a very considerable proportion never does circulate again within the country — for firstly, of the money employed by government, all that is spent in supporting the colonies and the army and navy abroad never does return, nor that which is paid to ambassadors — and secondly, of the taxes raised for the payment of the interest of the national debt, a great proportion immediately leaves the country never to return. In France, there is not a town and scarcely a village in which there are not some English living — living without exercising any trade, profession, or calling, and consequently drawing their revenues from England: now of these, the greater proportion are those who are deriving their means either from the public funds, or half-pay as officers in the army and navy — from the taxes, in fact, because property of any other description would require too much looking after to allow them thus altogether to absent themselves. To the extent of the revenue they draw; to that extent is not only the individual who pays taxes inconvenienced, but the country generally impoverished.

But even supposing the money taken from one person was again returned into general circulation, still I think it not only impoverishes the individual but injures the nation; for if taxes be raised, upon a certain quantum of land for in-

stance, or a part of its product taken away, the possessor will of course have less to exchange for the labour of others; and *if it be to such an amount as to* render him incapable of procuring such a quantity of labour as to make that land as productive as it would otherwise be, the quantum of production from that land would be reduced by the immediate operation of taxation, and the country injured to that extent.

CHAP. XV.

How Expenditure may be curtailed.

Let us consider, first, how the public expenditure can be absolutely curtailed. I hate the argument in favour of extravagance, of its being suitable to the grandeur of the British nation. With his own means let a man do what he pleases; I quarrel not with generosity; but when I see persons with salaries who never yet benefited the state — offices with little or no duty attached to them, cut out for persons of great connexion — when I see expensive follies devised, and plundering almost permitted, by the irregularity with which public accounts are kept, and the unnecessary expense incurred in the collection of the revenue — and when I recollect that the comforts and necessaries of life are curtailed to so many to effect this, I do think that good might proceed from a change. Sir H. Parnell says, "In the year 1806, the gross receipt of the revenue of the united kingdom was 58,255,175*l.*, and the charge for collecting it was 2,797,722*l.*; in the year 1826, the gross receipt was 54,839,685*l.*, and the charge for collecting it was 4,030,337*l.* Hence it appears, that 58,255,175*l.* was

collected in 1806 at a less charge by 1,232,615*l.* than 54,839,685*l.* was collected in 1826." "It appears by a paper laid before the committee of finance, that the expense of the treasury, which is now 80,542*l.*, was in 1797 44,066*l.*, so that it has nearly doubled since that time, although the income and expenditure of 1797 was as great as the income and expenditure of 1827." "The bank of England annually receives about 270,000*l.* for its trouble in paying the dividends." It would exceed the limits of this pamphlet to continue the enumeration; I will, however, content myself with saying, that Sir H. Parnell has distinctly shown that an enormous saving might be made merely in a revision of the expenditure by government.

With regard to the pension list, I would suggest that it be divided into three parts:

The first — Those who have rendered eminent services to the state, and in their old age are worthily enjoying an otium cum dignitate.

The second — Those who have rendered services to the state, but have been discharged while yet capable of exertion with a portion of their former salary.

And the third — Of those who have performed no services to the state, but owe their pension to favour and high connexion.

With regard to the first class—I say, let those who have done or are doing real service to the state be well paid; the labourer is worthy of his hire — leave them alone.

With regard to the second — let them be employed in preference to any other persons in the different offices; it is better to pay one person than two.

With regard to the third — erase their names; their names ever having appeared on the list is a disgrace both to themselves and those who put them there.

If persons are unable to support themselves in the

rank of their fathers, it is not for the country to do so for them. Let them descend, *ainsi va le monde;* for persons claiming distinction to be supported by alms, is not to be tolerated. "Although it may be impossible," says Sir H. Parnell, "to relieve industry from all those taxes which are injurious to it, no attempt can be made towards accomplishing a partial repeal of them without producing a great public benefit."

CHAP. XVI.

That Taxation should press equally upon all.

THE second point is equalization of taxation.—The taking care that every individual bears his own proportion; and that a double portion does not press upon the shoulders of any. There should be no privileged class in society, and then none can justly complain that, in return for protection of person and property, he is required to contribute his share. But if one man pays nothing, another must pay double. This is not fair, as I can see no reason why one man is to enjoy benefits so great at the expense of another. No legislature can enact a decree to last for ever: it may be contrary to reason and to right, and must be revocable whenever discovered to be so. Of such a nature do I consider those acts of parliament which sanctioned the sale of property to individuals (for funded stock is property), with the condition that neither they nor the future possessors of it should pay taxes for it; or, in other words, for the protection of it: that come what might,—

let the country be obliged to require contributions ever so heavy from the rest of the community in proportion to their property; the persons who possessed this particular description should always derive every advantage from the application of the money so contributed by the rest of the community for the service of the public, without being put to the slightest inconvenience. That if peril come, which threaten these, in conjunction with the rest of the nation, that the rest of the nation should find the means of averting it from both. Supposing four persons were to undertake a journey together across a desert in Africa, and that previous to starting it was agreed that three should fight if necessary, but that come what might the fourth was to be defended by their exertions, without any interference on his part. Supposing that, having made this convention, they start; that they meet with several difficulties, but none so great that the exertions of the three cannot overcome them. At last a resistance, more formidable than any of the others, occurs: the three use their best endeavours, but are worsted. Quære, whether, to save the lives of the whole party, ought the fourth man to fight? Answer.—If he does not he will perish with the rest. Quære, whether they ought to allow his obstinacy to endanger them?

The privileged classes in France severely suffered for the enjoyment of so unnatural an exemption, and one precisely similar to that of the fundholders in this country.

CHAP. XVII.

That the Method of imposing Taxation is an Affair requiring much Judgment.

THIRDLY, with respect to the discretion used in imposing those taxes necessary to be raised, it is a matter of the utmost importance, as it may and does occur, that, raised in one manner, a sum will gall and annoy, while raised in another it will scarcely be felt. In one manner it will interfere with the comforts and necessaries of life; in another the payment will not be perceptible, or it will be paid by those to whom it is of no importance. Again, lay it very heavily on any particular article, and the tax will so decrease the consumption as to render the revenue smaller than if half the duty had been imposed. The same judgment, too, that is necessary to levy, is also to repeal; — a tax productive of great revenue to government may be repealed without either giving much impulse to the demand for labour, or materially adding to the comforts of the people, and of this nature was the taking off the duty on beer. The only persons benefited by it were the brewers, who, as the demand for beer was increased, and the duty on malt and hops remained the same, composed the beverage of other cheaper, but injurious ingredients. Had one-half of the malt duty been taken off, and the peasants encouraged to brew in their own houses, they would have had a wholesome and nutritious beverage, while the defalcation from the revenue would have been inconsiderable. If taxes upon manufactures were to be repealed, as far as the existing artificial circumstances of the country would allow, a great impulse would undoubt-

edly be given to production; and articles of comfort and luxury, now rare, would come more extensively into use, to the great benefit of all classes of society: while one class has the enjoyment of the thing itself, another is fed, clothed and housed by the production of it.

"There is no reason," says Sir H. Parnell, "except the high price, which is the consequence of the duty, why every house in the united kingdom should not be as abundantly furnished with plate glasses as in France. All the information which can be obtained from the best informed travellers goes to shew that if the duty were taken off, there would be a great exportation of this manufacture to foreign countries." "The duty of 3½*d.* a square yard on printed calicoes is at the rate of from 80 to 100 per cent. on the description of goods for garments worn by the lower classes of society, and only from 5 to 8 per cent. on the fine calicoes worn by the rich." "It is calculated that if this duty were repealed, there would be an increased consumption of 600,000 pieces of coarse calicoes, and employment for 4000 additional weavers." "The duty upon soap is 3*d.* a pound, or from 110 to 130 per cent.: a tax upon cleanliness this." "By relieving these and other taxes of a similar nature, it is calculated that employment might be given to several hundred thousand workmen."

In fact I am convinced that much benefit might accrue to the country, 1. By cutting off unnecessary expences; 2. By equalizing taxation; 3. And by levying and repealing taxes with judgment.

CHAP. XVIII.

That the natural Demand for Labour is to be increased by extension of foreign Connection.

UNLIMITED free trade under the peculiarly artificial circumstances of the country is, I know, impossible; but to the degree trade can be extended abroad it will do good, and the natural demand for labour will be increased to that extent.

CHAP. XIX.

That the natural Demand for Labour is to be increased by an augmentation of the Circulating Medium.

IT is an extraordinary fact that the produce of manufactures, clothing of all descriptions, is cheap, and that the produce of the agriculturist is also cheap—that is to say that food and clothing, the necessaries of life, are actually superabounding, and yet people have not the capability of purchasing them—those who have the one are unable to obtain the other, and *vice versâ*, and yet both be desirous of doing so.

This I think points out that there is something wrong in the medium of exchange, that it is not in sufficient quantity to afford the necessary facility. In proportion to its quantity will be the facility of exchanging one object for another. When it is deficient, recourse must naturally be had to the actual giving a shoe for a stocking, and loaves

for a piece of cloth—to barter—to the truck system. It matters not what that medium is, whether it be paper or whether it be gold, provided it be a *bonâ fide* representation of property. The mischief of the system which preceded the return to cash payments originated not in the circulation being paper, but in that paper not representing any thing but the impudence of any person who chose to write "Bank" upon his door. It was no more a representative of property than the member for Gatton is a representative of a large and respectable constituency; the fault of one and the other was the same, viz. they were not to be depended upon. But a paper currency such as recommended by Sir H. Parnell, and such as has been made use of with such success in Scotland; a paper currency really and truly representing the property it professes to do, supported by all the wealth and character in the country, could be liable to no such objection, and a failure would be next to an impossibility, while by increasing the facility of exchange, it would give a stimulus to the market for labour, and thus increase the real wealth of the nation.

Part of the evidence of R. Spooner, Esq. Worcester:—

"What do you consider to be the causes which have led to the adoption of the truck system?

"I look upon the truck system to be rather a symptom than the disease itself; it is the total inadequacy of finding means to pay the labourers in money, which has compelled the manufacturers to have recourse to the truck system.

"What in your opinion would be the remedy for the truck system?

"Increasing the quantity of the circulating medium in the country, and so enabling the manufacturer to get the same easy way of procuring money to pay his men that he formerly had.

"What do you consider to be the causes of the present

want of employment and of the low wages prevailing in so many parts of the country?

"The want of a sufficient circulating medium in the country.

"You are therefore of opinion that the apparent excess of labour arises altogether from the inability to employ men, and from the general pressure on the country?

"Exactly so.

"Do you admit that all articles are cheap in proportion to their abundance or rarity?

"No, I do not; there is another cause which operates upon price; *that is, the power of demand;* this makes the difference of cheapness or dearness of articles, As an abstract question, I should say that the supply regulates the demand; but as a practical question, I should say *there is a difference between the want of an article and the power of demanding it.*

"Are you not of opinion that this country possesses that amount of capital which, with the assistance of a proper circulating medium, would give sufficient profitable employment to all the labouring poor?

"Decidedly.

"How do you account for this, that in some parts of England occupiers of land and yearly tenants have agreed to tax themselves, having merely the prospective benefits to be derived from emigration, by sending off the overplus of the population of their respective parishes?

"Because I consider that those individuals have been in the habit of confining their views to the peculiar sphere in which they live, and they feel that their immediate pressure is having more labourers than they have means to to employ. They conceive that by the sacrifice of a few pounds at the present moment, they shall ultimately be relieved from that. I think that in that conclusion they are

erroneous, and they will not get the relief they anticipated.

"You have stated in a former part of your evidence that you consider food and raiment as capital applicable to the cultivation of land, and it was your opinion that the means of employing that capital must depend upon the amount of the circulating medium of the country, and of the fixed payments which are to be made?

"I do; and it is from that circulating medium not having been sufficient that the truck system has been created, which has substituted the payment of food and clothes instead of payment of money; and I very greatly doubt the policy of an attempt to put down that measure; and I doubt it on two grounds; it either will or will not be effectual: if it is effectual, it will stop a great many works which are now carried on entirely by capital which the truck system affords to them for carrying on those works; if it is not effectual and is evaded, it will be evaded by an increased risk from the legislative alteration, and that increased risk will induce the manufacturer to deal out his commodities on still worse terms to the persons whom he employs in order to cover the increased risk so imposed."

The payment of a portion of labourers' wages in food, as in Northumberland, would, I think, be also advantageous as facilitating the demand for labour. It would likewise protect the labourer in two ways; Firstly, from the retail dealer, and secondly, from great fluctuation of wages.

CHAP. XX.

That the natural Demand for labour is to be increased by home Colonization and general Enclosure Act.

Mr. Cowling, after stating the quantity of land in the united kingdom which would make a return for the employment of the plough, viz., 15,000,000 acres, answers the following question of the committee of the House of Commons to make enquiries respecting emigration:

"Can you suggest any reason that can prevent capital being employed in the cultivation of the waste lands, other than the conviction that it will not repay?

"Most assuredly; because it is impossible to touch those lands without legislative interference.

"Is the committee to infer that it is your opinion that there are large masses of uncultivated land, capable of great improvement, which would yield a large interest upon the capital employed in improving them, but which remain in their present unprofitable state owing to the proprietor wanting capital?

"I think it may be said it would yield interest, (more than the common rate of interest,) but I would not say large interest."

Those who oppose themselves to the location of able-bodied paupers upon land now lying waste, say that all capable of bringing a return for capital laid out is cultivated, and that the circumstance of its not being so is a proof of the fact, as from whatever the best return is to be drawn, upon that will capital be embarked. To this I can reply in two ways. In the first place, capital cannot be freely employed upon a great proportion of this land, as there are legal difficulties existing which in each distinct

spot require a distinct law to destroy them; and a law requires both considerable expense and time before money can be employed upon the land itself.

In the second place, there may be much land which would not only give sustenance to those employed upon it, an overplus to exchange for clothes and other necessaries, and a something to put by for the future, but which also would pay in addition, after a few years' cultivation, a small rent. And yet this land would not produce a sufficient return to induce a speculating capitalist to embark his property upon it, as persons of this description are not satisfied without very large and speedy returns.

Now if there be a great quantity of land of this description in the united kingdom, although the quantity may be considerably overstated, I do say that the locating able-bodied labourers upon it with their families would not only greatly diminish the poor rates, but greatly increase the national wealth and strength. All the overplus of the product of labour exchanged for manufactures, &c. is an increase of the home market for the manufacturers, and would consequently have the effect of augmenting the natural demand for the labour of others; while every individual so located is an addition to the national strength, because, from his stake in the country, he is naturally interested in the preservation of peace, order, and good neighbourhood.

The following is part of the evidence of R. M. Bacon, Esq.:

"You have land which produces nothing, but put him (the labourer) upon that land, place a spade and a bushel of seed by his side, and in a certain time he will produce his own subsistence.

"Are you prepared to state what quantity of cultivable waste land there may be in the united kingdom?

"Mr. Cowling, a civil engineer, has stated before the emigration committee, and delivered in a table, in which he shews that there are about fifteen millions of acres cultivable but not cultivated.

"Are you prepared with any details as to the expense of locating a pauper?

"Of course I have considered the subject, and I have understood that in about twelve years a man will be able to repay the cost of location; the expense varies, according to different opinions, from 40*l.* to 60*l.*, that is, providing him with a habitation, with utensils, and with living for such a portion of one year as might be required. Some compute 20*l.* for building a cottage, and others 30*l.*

"Do you refer to single men or married?

"A married man. Mr. Cowling's computation is 52*l.*, and that he gives him one or two cows into the bargain.

"What proportion of land would you apportion to each family?

"From the inquiries I have made amongst labourers, I find that they are satisfied perfectly with from two to four acres, as affording the entire means of maintenance for a family: I have never asked a man who would take less than two; I have never found a man who would ask more than four."

In contrasting home colonization and foreign emigration he says—"I think one of the capital circumstances in the comparison is, the circulation that is produced by the one, and which cannot be produced by the other. For instance, suppose a man makes a return in produce from abroad, and accepts manufactures from this country, there the transaction ends; but if a man in this country employ the produce he first raises, which is subsequently converted by the common process into any staple article, whatever is so produced through the infinite ramifications of society remains the national wealth of this country."

"Do you consider that a small farmer, with no capital but his labour, can compete with a large farmer who has capital?

"I think, in this case, that is not precisely the object — the object is to make a man raise enough for his own subsistence."

Property is, in fact, the key-stone upon which the arch of society depends; it is that, and only that, which all true policy regards. On the strongest of all human passions is it founded; namely, the preservation of the individual, and from it flows all the virtues which most dignify civilized society.

M. Sismondi, in his Principes d'Economie Politique, says, "In the German provinces of the Austrian monarchy, the contract between the lord and the peasant has been declared by the law to be irrevocable, and, at the same time, the greater part of the Corvées have been changed into acquittances either by a money rent, or by payments of produce, which have been made perpetual. The peasant has, by this means, acquired the effective property of his house and land, which are only charged with a rent, and some feudal services. Moreover, in order that this class may not be ultimately oppressed or dispossessed by the rich lords who should reside amongst them, the law does not permit a gentleman to purchase any of these peasant occupations, or if he does purchase one, he is obliged to restore it, on the same conditions, to some other family of peasants, so that the proprietorship of the nobles does not increase, nor the agricultural population diminish. This population, in the enjoyment of abundance and security, rarely attained in these provinces the limits marked out by their comfortable conditions, and a good method of cultivation, but it has not overstepped them." Mr. Bacon in his evidence here observes — "I think that is an im-

portant circumstance to remark, because it proves *that persons having a certain quantity of goods and land, are more careful than those who have none; the most* RECKLESS *members of society are those who* CARE ONLY FOR THE DAY." Sismondi goes on to say—"The parents acquainted with their resources, have been careful not to reduce themselves to indigence, or to marry more of their children than they could provide for. *Men may be trusted to maintain themselves in their condition when they are able to judge of it, and depend only on themselves.*

"The class which is always prompt to burden the state with a miserable population, consists of those who depend only on their own labour and the will of others, and who have not the means of judging of the chances to which their children will be exposed. The Austrian government, by thus interposing in behalf of an order which, if left to itself, would necessarily be oppressed, has compensated to the happiness of its subjects, and its own stability, the greater part of the vices of its system. In a country without liberty, where the finances have at all times been badly administered, where wars have been perpetual and disastrous, because that obstinacy has always been accompanied with incapacity, the great mass of the population, composed almost entirely of peasants, proprietors living in comfort, has been rendered happy; and this mass of subjects, feeling their own happiness, and dreading every change, frustrated all the projects of revolution and conquest which have been directed against that empire." Again he says—"I entertain no doubt, that the mere lifting a man into a situation in which it becomes a matter of greater prudence for him to take care of himself and family than it was before, raises a presumption that he will do so. *A new character is given to a man by new circumstances.* The labourers are particularly sensitive to their own in-

terests, and in whatever way their minds are directed to their own interests, they will follow it. There will always be reckless characters; but wherever the mind of a labourer is instructed as to the best mode of promoting his own interest, he will follow it with greater instinct than those who have higher objects in life." This is evident enough: a person who is obliged to have recourse to prudence to preserve life, is more likely to have a regard for it than he who has ample means for that purpose.

The Earl of Stanhope says—"And I would here observe, that in several, if not in all the states of Germany, the labourers are copyholders, and derive great advantage from the occupation of land, which, however, in some states is heavily burdened by direct taxes—land-tax and others: but that such are the direct advantages which they receive, that in those countries poor rates do not exist, and as far as my experience, which is very considerable, extends, I am fully convinced, that the labourers in those countries live in much greater comfort than they do in this."

Sismondi is right; for in the circumstance of lower classes possessing property, lies the secret of the rejection of the principles of the French revolution by the German peasantry, and in this, their not having property, the secret of the adoption of those principles by the French themselves. With such examples before our eyes, can we doubt but that the only way to neutralize the spirit of change that is abroad, is to make every one interested in the preservation of order from having property to preserve.

Had one half of the treasure expended in replacing a Bourbon on the throne of France, who has been again and for ever expelled, been expended in ameliorating the condition of our own peasantry, we should not only have drawn a *cordon sanitaire* for the time, as we certainly did

by our arms, against contamination from the principles then abroad, but we should have established one more effectual and lasting in the bosom of every individual Englishman. Besides, France would long since have been tranquilized, and the violence of internal discord would have subsided: had not the fermentation been kept up by foreign bayonets: Buonaparte himself never have been called into notice, and he would have sunk into the grave —

"A Cromwell, guiltless of his country's blood."

Argument is no more to be answered by force, than force is by argument. I hardly know who is the most ridiculous, he who replies to an argument by a blow, or he who answers a blow by expostulation.

Romances relate tales of knights who have attacked spectres with the sword; — they cut them in halves, and they united again; they pierced them, and yet they remained unhurt: thus their strength was wasted in attacking an enemy invulnerable to such weapons. And such has been, in fact, the case with England: we have wasted our power in resisting principles by the bayonet, which might easily have been overcome by taking some well-devised method of bettering the condition of the lower classes. Do but consult the table below, and count the treasure expended (in fighting a spectre) in deferring an evil which, at this very moment, is nearer to us than ever.

With whom.	In what Reign.	When begun.	When ended.	By whom ended and where.	Duration of each war. Y.	M.	D.	Duration of each war. Y.	M.	D.	Debt at the beginning of each war. £.	Debt contracted in each war. £.	Total debt at the end of each war. £.	Average annual net revenue. £.
France	Will. III.	7 May, 1689	10 Feb. 1697	Earl of Pembroke, at Ryswick.	7	9	3	4	2	22	664,262	20,851,480	20,700,000	3,0104,50
France and Spain	Anne	4 May, 1702	13 April, 1713	Earl of Stafford, at Utrecht.	10	11	9	5	9	3	16,394,701	37,386,375	53,681,000	3,705,027
Spain	Geo. I.	16 Dec. 1718	13 June, 1721	Duke of Somerset, at Madrid.	2	5	23	18	4	6	51,211,015	4,011,903	56,282,978	4,220,642
Spain	Geo. II.	19 Oct. 1739	18 Oct. 1748	Earl of Sandwich, at Aix-la-Chapelle.	8	11	30	7	7	0	46,954,623	31,338,689	78,293,313	6,497,306
France	Geo. II. and Geo. III.	18 May, 1756	10 Feb. 1763	Duke of Bedford, at Fontainbleau.	6	8	24	12	2	9	72,289,673	73,526,409	146,816,000	7,177,352
America	Geo. III.	19 April, 1775	3 Sept. 1783	Mr. Grenville, at Paris.	8	4	15	9	5	8	129,146,322	117,076,069	246,222,392	11,536,441
France, &c. &c.	Ditto	11 Feb. 1793	27 Mar., 1802	Marquis Cornwallis, at Amiens.	9	1	16	0	11	11	271,113,051	326,527,386	597,640,432	26,393,033
France, &c.	Ditto	9 March, 1803	30 May, 1814	Viscount Castlereagh, at Paris.	10	11	10				597,640,452	456,406,442	1,054,046,184	61,215,242

The Loans contracted in the first Revolution war with France were.....£248,181,005
Ditto last war, ending the 30th of May, 1814..... 57,940,000
Add debentures subscribed in 1813, 53 Geo. III., cap. 41, 53..... 799,300
306,920,305

Although we are at the eleventh hour, I do not even now think it is too late: more activity, more personal exertion, and more determination, are necessary to make healthy rules of policy to bear; but still I think they may, and if we can but once make the lower classes feel an interest in the preservation of property, Cobbett may make his tours from the north to the south, from the east, and to the west; and if he can succeed in collecting a circle of children or gossipping old women about him, he may congratulate himself upon the success of his labours; unless, and which I own he is very qualified to do, he gives them lectures on cottage œconomy, or any other subject connected with their real interests. *The way to quiet sedition is to make sedition folly. Let the answer to injurious doctrines be the perception each individual has of his own comfort.*

Michiaveli shrewdly accounts, in his Prince, for the easy conquest of Persia by Alexander, and his successors who were engaged in perpetual quarrels among themselves, being able to retain it, by the circumstance of the Persians at that period having no interests of their own worth preserving, so that they were not afraid of, and indeed experienced no loss by the change. Patriots invariably are those who have that which they may lose.

Before any judgment can fairly be pronounced against home colonization, all legal restrictions upon waste land should be done away by a general and well considered inclosure act. Persons would thus be left at liberty to embark capital upon it, and parishes should be encouraged to thus place out their population which is now redundant. The evidence of Mr. Hodges respecting emigration, clearly proves that the money expended would soon be saved, and an additional impulse given to labour in the place from which those who are not wanted are sent. Besides, some

arrangement might be made for the person so located to repay by instalments the expence of location.

CHAP. XXI.

That the proportion between the demand and supply of Labour cannot be ascertained without a change in the Law of Settlement.

UPON a consideration of the evidence before the committee, I find that many persons of considerable experience are inclined to think that over-population is rather local, confined to particular districts, than general throughout the country; and I own that many instances may be adduced which much favour that opinion. For instance, one parish may be pointed out, where, in consequence of local circumstances, the population, beyond all measure, exceeds the demand for it; while another, no great distance off, may be found where the population is no greater than there is need for. This would not be the case if labour could circulate freely about the country; the surplus would then be nearly equal every where, and one might calculate with some hope of arriving at the truth with regard to population. In order that this should be the case, a change is necessary in the law of settlement.

CHAP. XXII.

That the natural Demand for Labour is to be increased by a different mode of administering the Poor Laws to that which now prevails.

As I have shewn that the amount of the poor rates have the effect of decreasing the demand for labour while they increase the demand for idle population, every step towards reducing their amount must, to the extent it goes, increase the natural demand for labour. I cannot do better than quote some evidence with regard to the manner in which they have been greatly diminished in some places by judicious administration. Although it may be said with truth that Mr. Walker did not act at all according to the spirit of the law, (which an administrator of the law ought to do) the effects of his administration shew, however, one thing — viz., that every step taken in opposition to it has been attended with effects beneficial to the lower classes, and thus his evidence is a confirmation of the principles upon which I argue.

Part of the examination of Thomas Walker, Esq., magistrate at Lambeth street:

"What was the amount of rates (at Stratford, in the parish of Manchester) when you began in 1817?

"I think 1600*l.*: that includes the county rate and every other charge. 1200*l.* of this was applied to the relief of the poor.

"What was the sum of money expended for the relief of the poor in the years 1817-1818?

"From March 1817, to March 1818, 812*l.* 16*s.* 6*d.*

"What were the payments in the succeeding years?

"From March 1818, to 1819, 537*l.* 19*s.*7½*d.*; in 1819-20, 489*l.* 12*s.* 6*d.*; in 1820-21, 368*l.* 4*s.* At that time I ceased to reside there.

"Can you state the principal means to which you resorted to produce this reduction in the rates?

"*By a diligent investigation into each particular case. We kept a register of all the cases.* I collected the farmers together as much as I could, (sometimes with difficulty) and introduced a system that gave them confidence. They were very willing to do what was right as soon as they were convinced there was somebody to place confidence in. At first they thought I should not be able to effect any improvement, and then that I should not persevere.

"What measures did you resort to with regard to the poor, either to relieve the wants or to diminish the applications for relief?

"We had printed forms, the same as used in the town of Manchester, stating the names of the parties, their ages, the number of children, their occupations, and what rent they paid, and whether belonged to any club. *Whenever a person applied for relief, the particulars were all put down, and we gave relief according to each case.* Then we gave the applicants such relief as we thought their necessities required, but the least possible, either for a given time or not; *if for a month, we made them come again at the end of the month, and took their case again, and very likely there would be a difference in their statements.* By referring back we compared the one with the other; so we went on, always giving the least possible sum of money. We did not adopt any particular expedient.

"In consequence of that system of administration of the poor laws, did no cases of distress ever occur in the parish which compelled you to deviate from your rule?

"No. I always gave relief where I thought it was necessary, and no accident whatever happened.

"Did no cases occur to you where the families were in

severe suffering from the improper conduct of the head of the family?

"If a woman said she was in a state of starvation on account of the drunkenness of her husband, and that she ought not to suffer for his faults, I used to reply, 'Certainly you ought; you married him for better and for worse; you should have been more prudent in your choice; but I shall not let you starve; I will give you something for your children.' The magistrates before times used to hold, that if the man was drunken, the woman ought not to suffer.

"Did you not punish the father for his misconduct at the same time that you relieved the family?

"Sometimes, for not assisting their families when they could, individuals were sent to prison.

"During the time that you reduced those rates in the manner you have stated, were the poor equally well provided for as when the larger sums were raised?

"They provided for themselves better: I think they were much better off.

"Do you think the law sufficient for its object?

"*I think it would be better if there were no law at all. I act as if there were none* — entirely according to my own discretion; *and my aim is to abolish pauperism altogether.*"

Part of the examination of the Rev. T. Whately, of Cookham, in Berkshire:

"Do you know the number of acres of your parish?

"To speak in round numbers, 7000.

"Do you know the population?

"The population in 1821 was 2734; I believe it is rather turned of 3000 now. There are 640 or 650 houses in the parish.

"What is the principal part of the land — arable or meadow land?

"Chiefly arable.

"Do you know the amount of poor rates which were collected last year in that parish?

"1*s.* 6*d.* in the pound.

"Do not you consider that the labouring classes are well off in your parish?

"I think they are better off than I have ever seen them since I have known them.

"Do you attribute that to the good management of the parish?

"I do.

"Have you prepared a statement upon that subject?

"I have.

"Have the goodness to read the same.

"The system of management introduced by the select vestry of the parish of Cookham has been attended with very beneficial effects both to the rate-payers and the poor. To the former it has saved, in eight years up to Lady-day last, compared with the preceding eight years, no less a sum than 15,008*l.* 12*s.* 6*d.* To the latter it has been equally beneficial, by introducing habits of frugality, industry, and providence, which have been strongly marked by their beneficial effects. Only one bastard child has been registered in either of the two last years. The system is simple, and may be accommodated to the circumstances of most agricultural parishes. Its leading features are, the employment of the able-bodied poor, who apply for relief, at low wages, and at hard work by the piece, showing them that the parish is the hardest taskmaster and the lowest paymaster they can apply to; never giving any thing in aid of labour, rent, or rates; dividing the paupers in the workhouse into two classes — the old, infirm, and impotent, form the first; the idle, improvident, and vicious, constitute the second: to the former is allowed an ample supply of butcher's meat and other suitable food; to the

second nothing but bread and cheese. None are allowed to absent themselves from the workhouse, or to receive visitors within its walls, without an express and written order from an overseer. Every possible encouragement is given to honest industry, providence, and frugality, by the establishment of a saving bank, a friendly society, a lying-in charity, and all other means that can be devised. Young persons going to service are allowed an outfit of clothes; and a member of the friendly society is always received by the select vestry with marked attention. I cannot help adding, that during the late troubles there has been no fire, no riot, no threatening letter in the parish. In the midst of a district that has been particularly disturbed, Cookham and White Waltham (where a similar system has been adopted) have entirely escaped, although in Cookham there are several thrashing machines, and the only paper mill has been newly fitted up with machinery. The poor of Cookham have subscribed during the last summer for the purchase of coals, which were delivered to them in November. They have purchased linen, calico, and other clothing, during the year, at prime cost, to the amount of 160*l.* The friendly society, which insures to a subscribing member 8*s.* a week, and 5*l.* for the funeral in case of death, consists of about 100 members. To a penny club, within the year, in the village of Cookham and its immediate neighbourhood, has been subscribed 48*l.*; and the contributions to the saving bank have been uniform and regular, and amounted at Lady-day last to 3544*l.* 7*s.* 1*d.*

"Do you not conceive that a friendly society, when under good regulations, is beneficial to the poor?

"The most beneficial that can be.

"Do you find that the poor are disposed to subscribe to a benefit society?

"Yes—it was instituted by the farmers, and is managed by them, except that the labouring classes are collectors; but they shew no jealousy of the interference of their superiors; on the contrary, they find that it recommends them to their notice.

"Do you consider that the select vestry has had beneficial effects upon your parish?

"It has reduced the rate from about 3000*l.* to 1000*l.*

"When the dissolute are in the workhouse, you state that they are not allowed to go out without permission of the overseer?

"Yes.

"How do you enforce that regulation?

"The door of the yard is kept locked, and no pauper in the workhouse can go out without the door being opened by the keeper of the workhouse.

"You have also added, that you think there were a greater number of poor out of employ before the select vestry than now; how do you conceive that the select vestry have provided employment for them?

"They have provided employment by setting them to hard work at low wages by the grate — by the piece — the consequence was, that they found work for themselves. We gave them a piece of ground to trench—hard, gravelly ground — and many of the farmers thought we should trench the whole parish; but, I believe, we never trenched quite half an acre.

"As soon as they were sent to work they went away and got work?

"Yes.

"You have stated that the poor fare much better at Cookham, and are maintained at much less expence; what reason can you give why the same plans are not adopted in the adjoining parishes?

"I can give no reason, except that I believe it wants a little firmness and a little continued exertion, and what is every body's business is nobody's — they attend now and then at the vestry, and then cease to attend.

"Expenditure of the poor at White Waltham:

	£.	s.	d.	
1812	826	3	11	
1813	775	18	11	
1814	815	2	7½	
1815	666	7	7	
1816	696	18	9½	
1817	525	15	6¼	Mr. Lee.
1818	584	14	11½	
1819	517	13	0	
1820	524	1	0½	
1821	494	17	10	
1822	280	18	8	New System.
1823	203	1	11¼	
1824	183	10	2¼	
1825	130	5	9	
1826	132	18	8½	

"The new system is only to relieve by food.

"Comparison of eight counties on a good system, and eight on bad — as delivered into the Committee of Lords, by R. A. Slaney, Esq., M. P. for Shrewsbury:

Eight North Counties.	York, E. R. N. R. W. R. Lincoln Westmoreland Cumberland Northumberland Durham	Population, 2,070,366 Poor rate, £754,500

Eight South Counties.	Kent, Sussex, Surrey, Oxford, Wilts, Berks, Norfolk, Dorset	Population, 2,037,665 Poor Rate, £1,511,699

"Have you any reason to believe, that in those counties where the poor rate is double the amount of the northern counties, the condition of the labourers in those counties is so good as that of the labourers of the north?

"I am confident it is much worse.

"Proportion to whole population of able bodied persons receiving from poor rate:

Sussex	1 in 11
Bucks	1 in 14
Wilts	1 in 30
Salop	1 in 54
Westmoreland	1 in 73
Northumberland	1 in 241

"This, however, only gives the difference in the proportion of able-bodied men receiving from the rate. If the mode and duration of relief were given, the difference of system would be much more striking."

CHAP. XXIII.

That, as the formerly existing Demand for the Labour of Women in Knitting and Spinning, has been much curtailed by the late Inventions in Machinery, another Demand may be beneficially created, by adding a Cow and a small Plot of Land to the Possessions of a Labourer.— Machinery, as well as Plots of Ground, more largely considered.

THE non-employment of women is, no doubt, to be attributed, in a great measure, to the use of machinery, in the manufacture of those articles which they were accustomed to make at home. A spinning-wheel is now a piece of furniture rarely to be seen in a cottage, and the knitting needles are seldom in requisition. It is, no doubt, a difficult matter to know what to do on this head. Laying restrictions upon the use of those powerful agents, is tantamount to laying restrictions upon human ingenuity. Besides, there can be no question that, eventually, the further inventions of this description can be carried, the greater will be the advantages to society. The evil arises from its too suddenly breaking in upon the existing state of things. Agents, with a productive power, never before dreamed of have come into full operation without society being at all prepared for such a circumstance. The invention and general use of those agents is actually within the memory of man. When change is gradual, the human mind provides for the new circumstances as they arise; but when too suddenly, it comes at one vast sweep, and all former ideas and settled methods of action are unhinged at once; the mind, incapable of immediately comprehending

with clearness, the nature of the new position, is all abroad, and society, from the very circumstances which should give it vigour, appears tottering to a fall. With regard, then, to machinery, what is the duty of those who are at the helm of affairs? — Not to attempt to repress it, for in the first place, that would be *impossible* — truth will out — in the second, *injurious*, because, of course, whatever increases the human powers of producing what is necessary to comfort and convenience, must be, eventually, for the benefit of mankind — and yet not let it go forward *laxis habenis*—to proceed with success, it should proceed steadily. In going down hill, does a prudent coachman increase the velocity of the motion? does he urge his horses to the top of their speed? No.—he puts on the drag-chain, and although he continues to descend, never proceeds at a pace he is unable to controul; he arrives, to be sure, somewhat later at the bottom, but none of the passengers' limbs have been broken in the descent.

As manufactories have the effect of congregating a great number of individuals together in one spot, and although they at one time employ them, at another they leave them without resource — in which case, a local surplus of population, created by one interest, is necessarily supported by another, for they immediately come upon the rates paid by the land; and as poor rates do exist, I think so long as they do, it would be a very just and proper step to make every manufacturer not only liable to support his own poor, but also enter into recognizances to government for the number he has in his employ, in order that his failure may not deluge a neighbourhood with a population they do not want. Should, however, the poor laws be repealed, this would not be necessary, as labour having a facility in circulating freely, the numbers would soon find themselves bearing the same relation to the demand for

labour which they did elsewhere. There is another point of view in which the productions of machinery should be considered — has improvement, in point of quality, been equal to that of quantity; or has not the quality been deteriorated, although the quantity has been increased? I think such is the case, and with regard to no articles in such a degree as the clothing of the lower classes: warmth and durability are the two principal requisites in their garments; and more deficient in those two essentials, it is impossible to find any articles than the light, flimsy, gaudy cottons, which now are in such general use among the lower classes of this country. Compare them with those stout manufactures of Rouen and Elbeuf, and that neighbourhood, which supply the peasantry of France with their clothing. But they are so much cheaper? A vast advantage this, when things are equally good; but when one dress of a Norman peasant will outlast half a dozen of those of ours, I must give the preference to the former. There is an appearance, and I make no doubt a feeling too, of warmth and comfort in their thick dresses, which forms a striking contrast to the miserable, thin, cold clothing of our country. As in the end the thing is actually cheaper, I am inclined to look upon the dearness of the original purchase price as an advantage. In the first place, peasants once furnished with clothes need not trouble themselves about purchasing for years to come, which circumstance I am confident engenders a more steady, staid character of mind; that ever changing and varying of the dress of the outward man must, I think, induce a disposition to fickleness and caprice in the inward. In the second, the saving up money for the purchase of what is necessary will help to form a character for prudence; whereas the buying a number of flimsy gowns whenever and as soon as one gets a little money, must inevitably encourage any na-

tural disposition there may be to carelessness and extravagance. There is another reason for my preference of the former — it is worth mending when out of repair, and we consequently see the good women in their chimney corners at work upon their husband's culottes or their own petticoats: ours, however, are not worth it, and they are consequently allowed to go in rags and tatters until they can buy new.

Lord Stanhope says, that in Devonshire, fifty years ago, a woman earned as much by spinning, a source of employment now totally ceased, as her husband did by his day's labour. The following evidence goes to prove the same point:

"Have you any employment in your parish for the women and children?

The Rev. S. Demainbray, Wiltshire. — "We had very recently lace-making for the children to a great extent.

"Does that continue?

"It is very nearly stopped; it must stop; Urling's lace takes away all the profit.

Committee. — "Was there any spinning or other manufacture during the time of the high prices?

Mr. R. Holloway, of Sussex. — "Yes; they used to spin: at that time, the farmers used to let the poor women have a little spinning, by which they might earn a shilling or two per week, but that is done away with now."

Richard Pollen, Esq. Chairman of the Hampshire Quarter Sessions, says — "I have conversed with some of the women in my parish, and they generally told me it is more profitable now to assist in the cultivation of this half acre than it is to make lace."

T. Partington, Esq. of Sussex. — "The principal advantages which the labourers formerly possessed, and have not now, were the facility of getting employment for women

and children, and the greater ease of getting assistance from the parish. The former I consider to have been a substantial benefit; but the latter, it is to be feared, has helped to lead to the distress now existing."

The employment of women, even in those occupations for which they alone are qualified, is now going quite out of fashion. You need but enter the shops in London, and you will see great stout fellows calculated to recruit a grenadier-regiment measuring out lace, selling ribbons, submitting baby caps to notice, and sorting silks, with hands more fit to guide the plough or handle the musket. Dr. Johnson asserted that tailors must be cowards; and I do think that those who can submit to follow such effeminate professions must be destitute of the sentiments and feelings of men. Tapes and bobbins become the hands of a woman, but a man appears rather out of character who interferes with them.

It would be idle to suppose that women will ever again return to their knitting and spinning — pursue what will not at all repay them for their labour. Other means of employing them must be found, and I do think those employments can be found which machinery can never deprive them of, and which will very much improve the moral condition of the lower classes of society. To every cottage should be attached a small piece of ground for cultivation, and a larger piece on which to feed a cow; while every cottager should be possessed of a cow and at least one pig. Women are by nature fitted for superintending the domestic affairs; and there is always comfort when they are in their hands. Let them bake their own bread, make their own butter, brew their own beer, feed their own pigs, cure their own bacon, and collect around home all those little necessaries and comforts which make life pass agreeably, and render home delightful. At pre-

sent, the husband prefers any place to home, simply, because home is not what it ought to be. Make their homes comfortable; for to a love of home may be attributed all those quiet and unobtruding virtues which, if they do not make distinguished, at any rate make good citizens. The only way to insure a man's acting in any particular manner, is, to make it his interest to do so — make him practically acquainted with happiness, and he must needs be good.

Those who teach, generally begin at the wrong end; they try to form the habit by precept; whereas, the habit must previously exist, for the precept to be understood — precept may perfect a habit, but not form one. Plots of land have been allotted to the poor, in different parts of the country, and, in all where they have been tried, with the most signal success. The following are rather copious extracts from the evidence before the committee upon the subject—their importance, however, would not allow me to omit them.

Committee — "Are you acquainted with any parish where land has been cultivated by the spade by the poor for any considerable time?

Rev. James Beard, magistrate for Bedford — "The Duke of Bedford has a parish about seven miles from me, in which he has kindly allotted a quantity of land to the poor for two years.

"Can you state what the effect of that allotment has been?

"Exceedingly beneficial to the poor."

The evidence of the Rev. S. Demainbray, a clergyman in Wiltshire, is very valuable — he let a quantity of land to labourers, in small portions, varying from one to two acres each.

"Have the goodness to state what rent you asked for that land so let to them?

"The same precisely that my farmer gave me, with this little difference, to prevent the trouble of poor men being teazed for rates, I paid the rates, and made a small advance, making it precisely the same as I received from the farmer who previously rented it.

"Are the lands held by those poor tenants well cultivated?

"Cultivated in such perfection, that I venture to say it is almost a disgrace to the farmer's cultivation — they are beautifully cultivated, and never fail.

"Were those eighteen acres the worst or the best?

"Perhaps it might be as good as any part of this farm, rather preferable, perhaps, to the majority. The consequence on those eighteen acres has been most favourable, and I beg to impress it on any gentleman who has poor land, as I will venture to say the crops for the last five or six years upon this poor land have been fully equal, perhaps superior, to those in any other part of the parish.

"Do you find that the tenants are able to pay their rents, and that they do so willingly?

"They do so willingly, I assemble them once a year and give them a supper — they have never failed to pay their rents.

"Do you make any stipulations with your poor tenants as to the mode of cultivating their land, or do you think any necessary?

"None — I have always found it better to leave the poor man free.

"Have any of the poor lands in your parish gone out of cultivation in consequence of the reduction of the price of agricultural produce?

"In the course of the summer of 1828, my farmer, who rented it at 60*l.* a year, which he had done for some years, told me it was utterly impossible he could go on with

eighty acres, tithe free, at 60*l.* a year — he could pay me only 30*l.* for that current year. The consequence was, I sent to my agent in the country, requesting him to do the best for me he could; and that as they were still eager to take land, he should let off ten or twelve acres to the poor, and the rest must go out of cultivation, or he must do the best he could. A day was appointed for the poor that wanted it; my agent found that the public-house was crowded with applicants; there were 100 applicants for this poor land, and he took upon himself, (contrary quite to my directions, but I am pleased with the result,) to let the whole of the land to the poor applicants; they drew lots for their pieces; as there was a great difference in the soil, there were prices fixed to the different parts according to the value; and the whole was let in this manner. That land was not fresh turned up, but had been under the plough for twenty years, and had never produced more than a meagre crop of oats or potatoes, and hardly ever a little wheat — that land, last summer, when I went to see it, was every part of it productive under spade husbandry; and by attention in those poor men in putting it in a different state from that in which the farmer in general does it, namely, by hoeing it in, and by the other attentions a poor man can give it, was a picture. Every body in the neighbourhood came to see it. That land was completely productive; the tenants came and paid on the appointed day, every one cheerfully and gratefully.

"You have stated that you received 30*l.* rent for the last year before you made this division; what rent do you now receive?

"The rent was 97*l.* 11*s.*, I paying the rates, which amounted to 14*l.*, and thus I received a benefit myself, independent of every feeling of benevolence. I received

60*l.* clear for that I could not obtain 60*l.*, for which I actually received the last year only 30*l.*

"Have any other parishes in your neighbourhood adopted the plan of letting land to the poor?

"I am happy to say, that in the year 1820, the adjoining parish of Rodburn was inclosed. Mr. Pollen was the whole and sole proprietor of the hamlet; he had some very inferior land bearing gorse, or furze, and brambles; he threw out eight acres for the purpose of benefiting the poor. Rodburn is the hamlet, and Malmesbury the parish. Malmesbury, the year following, inclosed a very large common of very wet poor land, which has been allotted wholly to the poor, and the consequence is, that with respect to the rates, the amount of poor rate for this parish of Malmesbury, including its several tithings, having been for the year ending 25th March, 1829, 2074*l.* 1*s.* 8*d.*, was, in the year ending 25th March, 1830, only 1424*l.* 18*s.* This land was of the worst description, boggy and clayey, and nobody could cross it with a horse; I believe a huntsman could hardly cross it in the winter.

"Have you seen that land since?

"Yes, I have, and there are fine crops upon it.

"Can you state the means the poor have of obtaining manure for their land?

"It is wonderful how they do procure it; the circumstance that is most valuable to a poor man at present, is, his keeping a pig, and the pig manure is the strongest and best."

The Rev. C. Wetherell, Rector of Byfield, Northamptonshire, says—"With respect to my own labourers, who have half an acre of land, the general estimate I should make in respect of their profit would be, at a low average, five pounds. This year, one man said to me, 'I would not take ten pounds for my crop on my half acre;' and I have

known them sometimes clear five pounds by a quarter of an acre of land under spade culture."

"Do you find that the men to whom you give plots of land are more industrious and better men than those who have not had the land given to them?

"The farmers in the parish generally represent them to be improved in those particulars."

Part of the examination of R. Pollen, Esq. Chairman of the Quarter Sessions of Hampshire:

"You have paid much attention to the administration of the poor laws in Hampshire?

"Yes, I have considerably; but the information I could give would be more applied to spade cultivation in North Wiltshire. I have attended a good deal to that subject in North Wiltshire for ten years, and I think it has been exceedingly successful in that part of the country. I came to some property about sixteen or eighteen years ago, which had been particularly neglected; a good deal of it is very poor wet land; amongst other soil, there was a considerable heath that I enclosed about the year 1820, and applied a certain portion of it to the cottagers who lived in my village.

"What is the parish?

"It is in Malmesbury, in the tithing of Rodburn. That tithing consisted of about 1500 acres; a portion of it was dairy country, about 1000 acres grass land, about 350 arable, about 50 wood and waste land, and about 100 acres of heath.

"What was the population of the tithing?

"About 160, as nearly as I can remember, and I should say about eighteen cottage families. I set apart eight acres of this poor land to dedicate to this purpose for the poor cottagers, and I gave them all, as nearly as I could make it, about half an acre a-piece: *I gave them only half*

an acre, because I did not wish it to interfere with their earning the common wages of labour in the tithing, and also considering that half acre was quite as much as a poor family could possibly cultivate and manure with any prospect of success. That was in the year 1820. This plan has been pursued until the year 1830, and very successfully in my opinion. I should perhaps state to your Lordships, that when I first came to this estate, it was particularly neglected; my relation, from whom I got the property, had been a widow, I think, sixty years, and had never more than once, if once, visited the property. There was no resident clergyman in the village, and no mansion-house of any description, and I should say that the population of the village at that time were particularly dishonest, very great thieves; the greatest number of them were poachers, and a very uncivilized set of people altogether. I pursued this plan for ten years, and I can say now that the people are perfectly reformed; I think they are particularly honest and laborious, and industrious and contented. I should also state, that I am not at all aware, except in one instance, of those persons whom I call my pauper tenants having applied for parish relief during that time.

"Have any of your pauper tenants joined in the late disturbances in the county of Wilts?

"None; on the contrary, they have come forward to a man to defend property, if necessary: there have been, within seven miles of this place, some disturbances at a place called Shenston, but they did not at all join it.

"What proportion does the produce upon this half acre of land bear to land in the occupation of farmers?

"I should say, at least one fourth of increase; and this year, one of those proportions in which, by way of change, the crop was oats, it produced the most magnificent oats I ever saw; I think they were nearly six feet high.

"Is the manure from one pig sufficient for a quarter of an acre?

"I think so: for the stubble from this quarter of an acre is very carefully collected and stacked, then the potato stalk is given to the pig, and the manure of the pig is of a peculiarly strong quality; therefore I should say, a pig does produce sufficient, or very nearly sufficient, to manure that portion of land.

"The measure of the quantity of land which would be useful to a cottager, is that which he can properly manure?

"Yes, and with the qualification that it should not be so much as would make him in the least independent of farmer's labour."

Part of the examination of the Rev. H. Foulis, magistrate, in Lincolnshire:

"You have stated that you have given the poor small gardens; can you state any particular results of that spade cultivation?

"I think it is a great advantage to them; *it enables them to keep their pigs, and it keeps them at home in the evening,* instead of going to the public-house.

"Do you find that these persons become better members of society, in consequence of having that land in their own occupation?

"I have no doubt of it; it makes them more moral."

In his examination, the Rev. G. Wells, of Weston, in Sussex, says:

"Do you think a certain portion of land would be of importance to a labourer?

"I think so.

"Would not the labourer be very glad to have it?

"I think so; in my own parish they have, for the last year, for an experiment, each had half a rood of land, the eighth of an acre.

"Can you state the particulars of that plan?

"We gave out to our parishioners, that those who chose to apply would probably be permitted to take such portion of the land which was then in the occupation of the proprietor, upon which they did apply, and they had such portions of land respectively allotted, which they have cultivated to very great advantage, I believe; I understand they are grateful for the use of it, and that they find great benefit in the result. It was chiefly planted with potatoes; that with good husbandry I am told produces forty bushels for that quantity of land; I should suppose thirty bushels might be considered a medium crop; it is poor land.

"Do not you consider that it would be very advisable that land should be given as near the cottages as possible?

"Certainly.

"Do those labourers keep pigs?

"Yes, generally.

"Do you conceive they will get manure enough to be able to manure, as they ought to do, a quarter of an acre or half an acre from their pigs?

"I should rather doubt half an acre; but the proportion of land I have spoken of they could. If it was close to the cottage, it would make a great difference; there is what is called the slut's dunghill in vulgar language, which is frequently thrown away, the refuse of the house.

"How do they cultivate that land?

"By the spade; it had been once ploughed.

"Do they pay any rent for it?

"Yes.

"What?

"At the rate of 2*l.* an acre; of course, no rates or tithes, or other charges.

"Was your parish one of the disturbed parishes?

"No; we had no disturbances.

"What do you find the real effect of having an allotment of land to be on the labourer?

"I conceive it has a very beneficial influence in giving him a sort of attachment to his home and to his superiors, which in consequence occasions their proper hold upon him — I mean, that influence which originates from the tenure; and I think also that the employment which it furnishes for his leisure hours has a beneficial effect, and the enabling him to live more comfortably through the winter by means of his potato crop, which was a new thing in Sussex. It has introduced, I hope, a more serviceable mode of disposing of the week's wages upon articles that were essential to their comfort.

"Do you find the habits of the men more domestic?

"I consider them better men for it altogether, but it is still a very imperfect trial."

In his evidence before the committee, R. A. Slaney, Esq. M.P. for Shrewsbury, says:

"Have you any experience in the result of spade cultivation?

"I have not myself, but I have spoken to several persons who have, and who have calculated the proceeds from spade husbandry, applied by persons who had their own interests to stimulate them to it, and from their calculations I am enabled to say, that a man and his family would be enabled to maintain themselves on five or six acres of ground very well. I will venture to make one observation in favour of such a plan, that a man's wife and family would be able to assist him.

"Do you intend that the labourers located on those five acres should pay rent?

"Yes; I think they should pay a low fixed rent, and that they should know that the rent is not to be raised as they improved the land, but that they should have the be-

nefit of the improved condition, for then they would struggle the more."

Part of the examination of the Bishop of Bath and Wells:

"Will your lordship have the goodness to state the extent to which you have now adopted the same system near the city of Wells?

"There are three fields, fifteen acres in each, making in all forty-five acres, which I have divided among the poor in the neighbourhood, in quarters of an acre and half acres, depending upon the size of the family, and there have been one or two individuals alone to whom I have given an acre; I have also let land to the poor at Mendip, which is at a greater distance from the city, to nearly the same amount.

"At what rent have you let that land?

"They have it at the rent which was paid by the tenant to myself before I let it to the poor; that in the immediate neighbourhood of Wells was at the rate of two guineas an acre. All the land is tithe-free, and is subject to no deductions, being part of the ancient demesne of the bishoprick.

"Can you state the produce?

"I have enquired particularly of the occupiers; they almost all agree in saying that a quarter of an acre will produce twenty sacks of potatoes, each sack containing three bushels, the average price of which, as far as can be ascertained, varies from 1*s*. 9*d*. to 2*s*. a bushel; therefore, the produce from a quarter of an acre will be five or six pounds.

"Do they cultivate potatoes only?

"They are at liberty to make what profit they can from the land; I have promised it to them during my episcopate; but besides potatoes, they grow also other vegetables and cabbages along the rows, for their spring and winter consumption.

"Are those allotments near their habitations?

"They are within a quarter of a mile of the city of Wells.

"Do they find any difficulty in procuring a sufficient quantity of manure to render that land productive?

"They manage, I believe, all of them to procure manure sufficient. The land has borne a crop of potatoes each year for six years, and each crop has been an improving one. They have had wheat on some few allotments, but potatoes are the general crop.

"Does your lordship know whether they purchase manure for the purpose of laying it on the land, or whether that manure is produced by their own cattle?

"Some few of them purchase, I believe, a little manure; but in general, by management, they procure it for themselves, which is, I think, one of the advantages arising out of the plan.

"What stock do those allotments enable them to keep?

"Some of the poor have a pig, but I do not think any of them have other stock; nor do I encourage their purchase of a cow, as it would be a risk, and few of them would have the means, I think, of keeping it.

"Does your lordship give any further assistance to these persons?

"Yes; I fix the payment to be made on a certain day, and if they pay at the time appointed, they have a deduction given them. I give also a premium to those who produce the best, the second best, and the third best crop, which is a stimulus to industry; they are proud of gaining the prize.

"Is your lordship of opinion that those persons who have had the small allotments of land let to them are generally better behaved than those who have not that interest in the soil?

"Decidedly so; *they are improved very greatly, not only in their morals, but in their manners, in their appearance, and their comforts.*"

Part of the evidence of the Rev. E. Dawson, of Alford, in Lincolnshire:

"Have you found that any material improvement has been effected in the condition of the labourers by the possession of those allotments of land?

"There is nothing that ever we have done that has been so beneficial and so satisfactory to the poor as letting them have this land.

"Have you found that your rates this year have been lower in consequence?

"It has very recently come into operation; the first crop they had came in in the autumn; it has bettered their condition since they got it. The rates are, in fact, I consider, virtually reduced in consequence of it, but there was an expense of 30*l.* or more in fencing and preparing the five acres for the occupation of the labourers; and this last year we have sent about twenty or twenty-one individuals to America, which cost us from 130*l.* to 140*l.*, and we have taken another field of ten acres and a half, upon which, before the termination of the present year, we shall expend in under-draining and fencing, and putting down gates, I think, from 30*l.* to 40*l.* more, and after all, the assistant-overseer supposes we shall not pay more than 6*d.* or 1*s.* in the pound additional in consequence of this; and if we had none of these expences, our rates would have been actually less than they were, and the poor in a better condition than they have been since I have been in the parish. The rates this year may be a little higher in consequence of those extra expenses."

Part of the examination of the Right Hon. the Earl of Stanhope:

"Has your lordship turned your attention to the subject of allotments of land to the poor?

"I have; and can speak from practical experience upon the subject.

"Have the goodness to state the results?

"I have given allotments on various scales; and in Kent, for the purposes of gardens, and in quantities sufficient for that object. I have, however, given, in Kent, to a very industrious and excellent labourer, an acre of land, at the rate of 12*s*., and for the term of his life, which he cultivates, partly as a garden and as an orchard, and partly in tillage; and I am informed, that he raises upon that ground sufficient wheat for the consumption of his family during half the year — his family consists of a wife, a mother, and two or three children.

"Is he employed solely upon that?

"No — he is in my employment as a gardener. The other land I have given to the labourers in the parish which I inhabit, and in a neighbouring parish, has been land of a good quality; and according to the principle which was lately stated by the Bishop of Bath and Wells, I have charged the same rent as might be fairly expected from a tenant, in order not to discourage the adoption of the system by others.

"Can your lordship state the produce of those allotments of land?

"They are cultivated entirely as gardens; and the benefit which the labourers derive from them is that of providing vegetables for their families, and enabling to fatten their pigs.

"What extent of land does your lordship consider as adequate for that purpose?

"I cannot speak correctly from memory as to the precise extent of those allotments, but I believe them to be half a rood. In both parishes I pay for those allotments the tithes and poor rates, which are, therefore, to be deducted from the rent that I receive. I have always been of opinion, that such allotments are highly beneficial to

the labourers; that they tend to improve their character and habits — to increase their comforts — and when those allotments are of such an extent as to yield a surplus produce, to give them a direct interest in those remunerating prices, which I hold to be essential to the welfare of the community. In Derbyshire, I have given allotments for the purpose of enabling labourers to keep cows, and those allotments may be taken, upon the average, to be about three acres and a half, which, I understand, is sufficient for the keep of one cow during the year; the land, which is very good grass land, being fed and mowed alternately. I am told, that those allotments have been proved to be extremely beneficial to them; and I have found, in all cases, that those who hold small allotments, pay their rents with *more regularity* than large farmers. I am not able to mention the precise rents, but they are the same as those at which the other parts of the estate are valued."

So perfectly assured do I feel, that the regeneration of the lower classes depends upon the co-operation of the proprietors of the soil with the legislature, in countenancing the plot of ground system, that any scheme which should not include it, must, in my opinion, fail of producing the desired effect. I am, certainly, for even going farther; for I would have every labourer possess a cow. The evidence I have quoted respecting the condition of the lower classes in Northumberland, almost demonstrates the advantage of it — their greatest comforts seem to have been derived from this source. The strongest objection appears in the ruin attendant upon the accidental death of the animal; but really I think this evil might be easily avoided — *by a society for insurance against such a misfortune* — and I am certain that the poor man would gladly pay a trifle annually to rid himself of so painful an anxiety. The possessions in either one, kind or the other, ought

not, however, to interfere in the least with his daily occupation as a labourer. Each man ought to possess so much and no more than will give employment to his wife and children, *and afford himself a little something to look after, and call his own, upon his return of an evening.*

There are those, however, who say "such schemes as these may answer well enough in the North, but it would be folly to attempt introducing them into the South. In Kent the lower orders are quite a different description of people—it cannot be." Now, really I cannot understand such argument; they are different, I grant; but what has made them so?—the difference of circumstances, which has influenced their manners—change the circumstances, and you change the people. But I have more than argument to adduce for its practicability. I am acquainted with a gentleman who has acted upon this principle, because he considered it a most excellent method of investing money, and the following was the substance of his statement to me:—"I have all the material for building upon the spot, excepting slate, produced upon my own land—timber, sand, lime, and chalk (for his cottages are built with chalk, and a most capital material it is); and attending closely, as I do, to the workmen, my expenditure in labour for the erection of two cottages adjoining one another, does not exceed 50*l.* These, my labourers are happy to take, at the rent of 5*l.* each, 20 per cent. for my outlay. I then let them have, to the amount of 5*l.* more, of land on which to keep a cow—if they cannot afford to buy one, they either hire one of some one else or of me. No farmer," he said, "could afford to give me the same price for the land, if he had several hundred acres, nor would do it so much justice as those poor people have done." The gentleman who has pursued this system, is, by no means, one of large means; he did it for the specific purpose of improving his income,

and, at the same time, of seeing his labourers happy and thriving around him. Mr. Rider, too, one of the members for Kent, has also tried the plan, and, to the extent he has tried it, with success. The cottage tenant not only paid his rent regularly in half-crowns, shillings and sixpences as he received it, but after a short time one of them so bettered his circumstances as to require more land. Mr. Rider has also separated off a field into which he allowed the poor to turn their cows at so much per head; this, too, he finds to be highly beneficial. I know not what other persons' feelings may be; but to me it appears, that the seeing cheerful countenances constantly about one, must greatly add to the aggregate of the happiness of the individual. Life is made up of a number of little circumstances; and their constant repetition in any one particular manner, have a great share in determining a man's life either happy or miserable.

Of all the schemes devised to obviate the consequences arising from the accidents likely to occur in the duration of human life, there is not one which to me appears so calculated to improve the condition, and minister to the comforts of the lower classes, as the benefit societies. Arranged upon a good plan, and conducted by persons of respectability, they must be of great advantage to any neighbourhood into which they may be introduced, and the lower classes need only a little experience therein to be convinced of their utility; and I would suggest, in order to give them that experience *nolens volens*, that where portions of ground are allotted, a rent, beyond what is intended for the landlord, might be reserved for this purpose. Hand in hand with a benefit society might go a savings bank: great are the advantages which have been derived from them in some particular districts; and if they could be brought to bear generally throughout the country, the benefit to society would be inestimable.

As cases of distress will and must arise under any system, however good, I much question whether lending a sum of money for the purpose of relieving would not have a better effect upon the poor than giving. In the first place, it would make them bear in mind that what they are receiving belongs to other people, which, when they get full employment, they must return; and, in the second, it would check that improvidence which induces them to squander their wages as fast as they get them. Dean Swift formerly proceeded upon this plan, and if I recollect right, he says he never had but one defaulter. Mr. Sherbourn, of Bedfont, near Hounslow, says, " We encourage the men to be in clubs, and we all of us subscribe to those clubs; *and in the winter time, if they want a little assistance by way of loan, we advance it to them, which they repay in the summer.*

CHAP. XXIV.

When the natural demand for Labour has been increased to the extent it is possible to do within the Country, and the Population still found supernumerary, the next step is Emigration.

To me the circumstance of the human species being congregated in so great a number in any one spot, that its wonderful capabilities, its latent energies, should never be called forth; that it should not have space, not only for the full, but even partial development of its powers; that it should be suffered, if I may so use the expression, to simply vegetate upon the face of the earth, and wear

out an existence so capable of conferring happiness upon others, and enjoying it itself, and rendering inanimate nature a monument of well-directed industry; that it should be suffered to wear it out with ennui to itself, and as a burden to others; and that the very propagation of it should be considered a real calamity, while there are so many vast regions of the world almost, if not entirely, uninhabited, which invite industry by the promise of returns of ten, nay, an hundred-fold, — where a family of children would be a tower of strength, and any accession to the society would be an increase of happiness. To me the circumstance is a very singular one. When all the methods I have suggested for increasing the demand for labour, and all of the same description which may suggest themselves to those better acquainted with the resources of nations than myself have been tried, and the population be still found redundant, then, and only then, must the government have recourse to the simple and natural method of reducing their numbers which I now allude to, *emigration*, — but then it ought. To do so before, would be weakening the resources of the nation; to refuse to do so then, would be neglecting to remove a burden. A hive sends forth its swarms; wild herds split into smaller companies, and tribes of American hunters divide when scarcity of game renders it necessary. But civilized, rather sophisticated man, is slower in perceiving what is for his advantage. No doubt there is an attachment to locality; but reason is of little service if it will not enable him to conquer, or at least subdue a feeling when it is diametrically opposed to his interest. *Wherever a man can best dispose of his labour, talent or ingenuity, to the advantage of his family and himself, there is his country.* And I do think it highly culpable in persons to awaken that amiable, that inborn love of one's native land, in

order to dissuade those, whose interest it is to emigrate, from doing so.

From the very narrow means I have had of obtaining information, this is the judgment I have arrived at:— That there can be no very accurate idea formed with regard to population so long as labour cannot circulate freely through the country; that the over population will be greatly relieved, and the general state of the country be improved by increasing the natural demand for labour; and that, although the real redundancy is much exaggerated, it is probable, in consequence of the poor laws having for a number of years created an unnatural provision for population, that even after increasing the demand for labour to the greatest extent, there will be still a redundancy, and this redundancy must be got rid of.

The means for conveying emigrants may be levied in two ways: 1st. By taxing the servants in the colonies where the emigrants are to settle, and, as they would increase the number of servants there, their wages would be lessened, the price being in proportion to the supply; the pressure of the tax would every day be less felt, and, in fact, in a short time it would be more than compensated for by the advantage gained, while its ever enlarging amount would enable our government to send forth her redundant hands in as great a number as it pleased. In order to be enabled to act immediately, this tax might be mortgaged for a number of years, and a sufficient sum immediately raised.*

2ndly, By allowing parishes to mortgage their poor rates for a certain number of years under specific regulations, and to furnish half the means of sending forth their useless members. As both the parish which sent, and the colony which received, would be equally bene-

* I am indebted to the Quarterly Review for this idea.

fited, it is but fair that they should both contribute their portion of the means. By the system I have proposed, over population would be put an end to, not by restraining increase (to me a most revolting idea), but by augmenting the demand for labour, and getting rid of what was then superfluous. *Supposing, in a parish, that there exists the means of supporting so many persons and no more: the natural alternative is that all beyond that number must either go or starve. Starve they will not, so go they must: and if there always exists a fund enabling them to do so, go they can and will.* And as it must be ages and ages before the human race will, according to the ratio of increase in time past, fill the space of the known world, over-population need not enter into our contemplation. Giving man the above alternative is not, in my opinion, either contrary to liberty, right, or benevolence. I say, as long as you can find subsistence, as long as you can find comfort in England, stay. As soon as you find yourself unable to do so, you have not only the liberty of removing to where you can, but your country, like a tender parent, will give you the means of carrying your design into execution. All the children of a family cannot remain through life in their father's house, — they must and will split into distinct families. A father who submits to this is never accused of being unnatural, — he only submits to the general law of nature.

As there is a parish in the county of Kent where local over-population existed to a great extent, I will quote the evidence of T. L. Hodge, Esq. to show how the emigration which he carried into effect operated.

" Are there more labourers out of employment now than there were ten or twelve years ago?

" Not so many.

" The question refers to the period previous to the disturbances?

"Yes, I will explain the reason; because four or five years ago I put in practice emigration to a considerable extent from my parish.

"Where did you send them to?

"They all went, with the exception of one family, to New York.

"Will you state the system you pursued on that occasion?

"I found the parish burthened with a number of persons who could not get employment at any part of the year; and when the autumn came, and throughout the winter there were from thirty to eighty persons out of work in the parish in which I lived. I considered that was an intolerable evil. I was very desirous of knowing whether the government intended to adopt any mode of national emigration; and finding that it was not likely to be the case, and finding also that the continuance of such a body of unemployed persons would, at no very distant day, consume all the produce of the parish; that there would be nothing left for rent, or tithe, or any thing else; it appeared to me that an immediate remedy was necessary to relieve the parish of that burden, and in the course of two years 149 persons emigrated to America, men, women and children; and in consequence of that we have now comparatively but few persons out of work, and our poor rates have materially decreased.

"What proportion do the 149 persons bear to the whole population of the parish?

"The parish contained 1746 inhabitants at the time of the census in 1821.

"Were the persons you sent out to America the best or the worst labourers in your parish?

"As soon as that measure was agreed to, I offered to the parish to advance all the money; this, of course, did

away with all the difficulties on the part of the farmers, who would have been distressed to have provided it, and they all concurred in assuring me that the money should be repaid by regular instalments, and that they would also pay me four per cent. interest for the money until paid off. This Michaelmas I believe the whole will be paid off.

"What did it cost?

"1197*l.* 4*s.* 3*d.* This is a paper containing the sums, showing what proportions emigrated in the years ending April 1827, 28, 29, 30: those in 29 and 30 were very few indeed, only four, in fact. The principal emigration was in 27 and 28.

"Have you any objection to put in that paper?

"Not the least. I wish to explain that the sum we agreed on for repayment was at the rate of 1*s.* per week, which we considered was less than they would have cost the parish if they had remained with us.

Extract from Paper.

BENENDEN EMIGRATION ACCOUNTS.

Years ending Lady-day.	Number of persons who emigrated.			Total amount of expences, the money borrowed.			Sums paid on account to liquidate the debt.			Average cost per head.			Annual expenditure, including emigration expences.			Annual expenditure exclusive of emigration expences.		
	men	wom.	childn.	£.	s.	d.	£.	s.	d.	£.	s.	d.	£.	s.	d.	£.	s.	d.
1825	.....			.....			.....			.....			2975	19	6			
1826	.....			.....			.....			.....			2962	5	8			
1827	29	10	19	534	19	10	85	3	6	9	4	5½	2300	7	5	2215	3	11
1828	25	22	40	621	17	4	212	6	6	7	2	1	2497	15	9	2285	9	3
1829	.....			.....			317	2	0	.....			2325	12	11	2008	10	11
1830	2	2	0	40	7	1	251	11	0	10	1	9¼	2184	11	3	1933	0	3
	56	84	59	1197	4	3	866	3	0									
	Total 149																	

This is a very convincing document; and the expediency of emigration, even when undertaken by the parish itself, must evidently be attended with the best of consequences. Look at the extraordinary diminution of expenditure in the little parish of Benenden, where the actual annual rental amounts but to 3200*l.* In 1826, before emigration took place, the expenditure was 2962*l.* 5*s.* 8*d.* In 1830, *inclusive* of the expence of emigration, 2184*l.* 11*s.* 3*d.* A diminution of 777*l.* 6*s.* 5*d.*, and without it 1029*l.* 5*s.* 5*d.*; and, as the whole sum was about to be immediately cleared, they will next year be in the enjoyment of the whole and full advantages of the judicious step undertaken by Mr. Hodges. But let this gentleman speak for himself.

"An assistant overseer was appointed in 1824, who has continued in office to the present time, and who has acted on an uniform system of relief during the whole time; consequently the great decrease in the rates must have been occasioned by the decrease in the surplus hands. During a great portion of the years 1825-6, there were from seventy to ninety able-bodied men on the parish books for want of employ: since fifty-six of them have emigrated, it is a rare circumstance to have any out of work, except in severe weather, *which is a convincing proof that ten surplus hands will generally create fifteen.*"

Nothing more clear; because, if a farmer has to pay ten men a pittance who do nothing, he must leave off employing the five he had in his service at good wages, or the money would not be forthcoming; hence is it that land is getting out of cultivation. Several of the emigrants returned, and the conduct of the overseer, at Mr. Hodges' suggestion with regard to them, was admirable.

"I recommended the overseer to employ those men, and to give them the same wages as others were receiving; but that he should put this to them, that as they had

received so much money from the parish at their own request to take them to America, the parish would and should receive that money at the rate of 1s. per week till that debt was paid. The men looked a little grave at first, but they agreed to it. The money was stopped, and I believe the debt, to a great extent, liquidated.

"Has any other parish in your neighbourhood followed your example?

"No.

"Have you pressed it upon the other parishes to do so?

"They are all desirous of it; but the difficulties are so great that they have not been able to accomplish it. One of the principal difficulties arises, not from the unwillingness of the parties to go, but from the great hazard that attends the advance of money; for, as your lordships know, it is an illegal measure altogether, and there is no sort of security for the repayment of the money beyond that of the good feeling of those benefited, viz. the rate payers.

"Any person objecting to that employment of the poor rates would prevent it?

"Yes, and the person would lose all his money."

Committee.—"Have you heard of any people going abroad from any of the parishes in your neighbourhood?

Mr. Holloway, of Shipley, Weald of Sussex.—"I have heard talk of it: one family went from our parish.

"Was that lately?

"About three years ago.

"Was that a poor family?

"Yes.

"Have any accounts been received from them?

"There was a letter came back to say they did not wish to come back again.

CHAP. XXV.

That it would be of little avail either to increase the Demand for Labour, or to remove the superfluous Population, if the Poor Laws be allowed to remain in force.

To at once repeal laws which are upheld by such powerful supporters as the *prejudice of the benevolent,* who boast that the law of England allows no man to starve, and *the necessity* there really exists of making men capable of supporting themselves before the unnatural prop be taken away, would be dangerous and absurd. Such ill-timed and rash conduct would but throw the firebrand of dissension into the country, which would shortly be blazing with civil war. But when, by the methods I have mentioned, superfluous hands shall cease to exist — or, at any rate, be much diminished — the labourer has begun to collect the comforts of a home about him; a pride in independence has again commenced to rear its head among them; *and a support from alms fallen into disrepute;* — all which things I do not dream, but rationally hope to see. When all this is the case — *modify the poor laws, or repeal them altogether.* Unless the former measures be followed by this, it would be of little avail either to increase the regular demand for labour, or to diminish the quantity of labourers; as the poor laws, by remaining in their present state, would, by creating the same artificial demand, cause us, in a few years, to be as much encumbered as ever. We should merely have tapped for the dropsy; but as the cause of disease would not have been eradicated, a recurrence of the affliction must be expected. But if we can once succeed in reducing population to the natural

demand for it, and destroy those improper causes which have regulated it in this country, we shall have succeeded in procuring, not only a benefit for the time, but in securing it for ever — as we shall have succeeded in placing it under the influence of what ought, properly, ever to have determined the force, the breadth, and the depth of the stream of human existence in each particular country.

While upon the subject of over-population, we ought to take into consideration those large bodies of Irish who come annually over to England about the harvest time in search of employment, which (as they can easily put up with the hardest fare, and most miserable lodgings) they obtain, to the prejudice of our own labourers. To forbid them to come, we cannot; they are our countrymen; while, to render their coming unnecessary, by placing them upon the same footing as our own labourers with respect to the poor laws, would be counteracting one evil by a greater. And, notwithstanding the opinion of a number of intelligent individuals upon the subject,—and I know many who consider the introduction of poor laws into Ireland as necessary,—I do hope, that the legislature will pause before they sanction what is so altogether wrong in principle, and must eventually entail misery greater than it is intended to remedy, upon that unfortunate country. To suggest those measures which would have the salutary effect of giving full employment to the lower classes of Ireland, and induce them voluntarily to desist from an annual emigration to England, must be for those better acquainted with the sister island than myself: but I can say, that none will be permanently effectual from which, after a short period, a reaction can be expected. I should, however, like to see the country gentlemen residing upon their own property; and by the diffusion of wealth, and the force of good example, gradually regenerating the people. Agents and

middle-men are so accustomed to turn a deaf ear to tales of woe, that they have not the bowels of compassion; and severities, such as the principals, had they known of, would never have permitted, are frequently exercised in their names, which bring their characters into disrepute, and give an improper influence to designing persons.

The landlord is the only person in whom lodges a discretionary power; it can scarcely be delegated to any one, and certainly not to those who, I understand, are in general the active persons in managing property in Ireland.

CHAP. XXVI.

Conclusion.

WHETHER I have effected the object of my labour I know not; but I have endeavoured to prove nothing to others of the truth of which I am not myself thoroughly convinced; and I have endeavoured to prove that the poor laws are wrong in principle, and injurious in operation to all — aye, even to those whom they were more especially intended to benefit — and that no laws which have not their repeal ultimately in view can ever more than alleviate for the moment the distress of the country. Temporary measures we have had in plenty; there never was a ministry so weak as to be unable to find out some: but temporary measures, whose ulterior consequences must be injurious, ought to be avoided, although the temptation of popularity has been too great for any ministry, we have yet had to permit them to sacrifice present advantage, however slight, for lasting good. "It will last my time," — "Apres moi le deluge," has been, if not the avowed, the evident, principle upon which the affairs of this country have been regulated for

the last sixty years. It did last their time — now their time is gone, and the deluge is come with a vengeance; and we, the present generation, feel its force; but we must stem it if we can.

I have attempted, in the preceding pages, to shew that the poor law strikes at the natural principle of human action, rendering industry needless, the desire to obtain an independence feeble, while it destroys all respect for the rights of others, and that it is not only futile, but noxious, to attempt to enforce charity which must be voluntary by a statute. In confirmation of my argument I have adduced examples from foreign countries and the north of England, to shew, that where some cause working in a similar manner to the poor laws does not exist, there is not the same degree of improvidence as in England.

I have then noticed the short period, viz., the last fifty years, within which the poor rates have swelled to their present enormous amount, and the cause which called the then existing but inactive power of evil into full operation, viz., the national debt; the great difficulty experienced by the agriculturists in paying them; and the erroneous ideas they instil into the lower classes. I have then suggested that the remedy, to be effectual, ought —

Firstly, To increase the natural demand for labour;

1st. By lessening the weight of taxes, by curtailing unnecessary expenditure, equalizing taxation, and thus taxing the fundholder, and by levying and repealing taxes with judgment.

2d. By extending foreign connexion.

3d. By increasing the circulating medium.

4th. By home colonization and a general inclosure act.

5th. By a severe administration of the poor law.

And 6th. By, above all, the plot-of-ground and cow system.

Secondly, When the natural demand for labour has been increased as much as possible, and the population to be found even then redundant, to get rid of the surplus population by emigration.

And Thirdly, When the surplus population shall cease to exist, or be greatly reduced, 1st. By increasing the natural demand for labour; and 2d. Getting rid of what is then really redundant by emigration; gradually repeal the poor laws.

As it is evident, from what I have quoted, that every attempt, however slight, to neutralize the effects of the poor laws has, to the extent that it has gone, been so far productive of benefit, not only to the possessors of land, by lessening the burden upon it, but to the poor themselves, by throwing them upon their own resources, it cannot be doubted but that the gradual abolition of the laws themselves would be attended with very beneficial effects. The more the human mind is thrown upon itself, the more fertile it is in resources: the knowledge of dependence upon self sharpens all the energies and encourages the capabilities of our nature; and when the capability is equal to providing for the wants of life, a noble and honourable pride in independence is originated.

But as in the mean time some temporary means are necessary, I would submit most particularly to the consideration of parishes the evidence above quoted upon the administration of the poor laws, and suggest —

1. The division of the inmates of the poor-house into two classes — the old and impotent into the first, who are to be treated with considerable indulgence; the idle and profligate into the second, under a more severe discipline.

2. The so directing the work of those necessarily em-

ployed by the parish to useful purposes, that it may at any rate make a return to the parish of the amount expended.

3. The making the parish the hardest taskmaster and lowest paymaster.

4. The keeping a book, in which the cases for relief are accurately registered, with all the particulars.

5. The relieving for a short time only, and at the end of it to again investigate each case, comparing the circumstances then stated with those previously given.

6. The lending money rather than giving.

7. The countenancing the plot-of-ground and cow system.

8. The encouraging benefit societies and savings' banks, the higher class of inhabitants subscribing to them.

9. The establishing an insurance society for cows and pigs.

FINIS.

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